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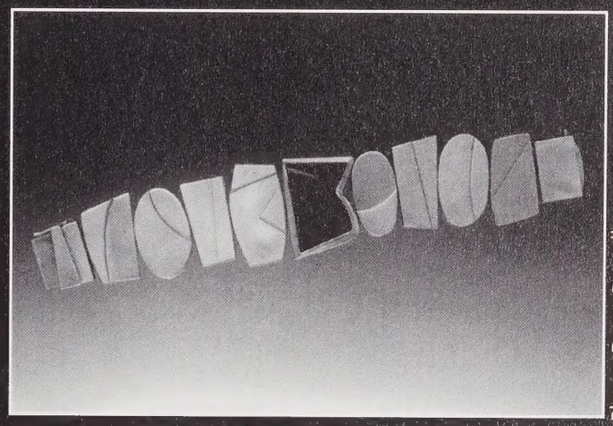

Photo: Dean Powell

Rena Koopman : Bracelet. 1995
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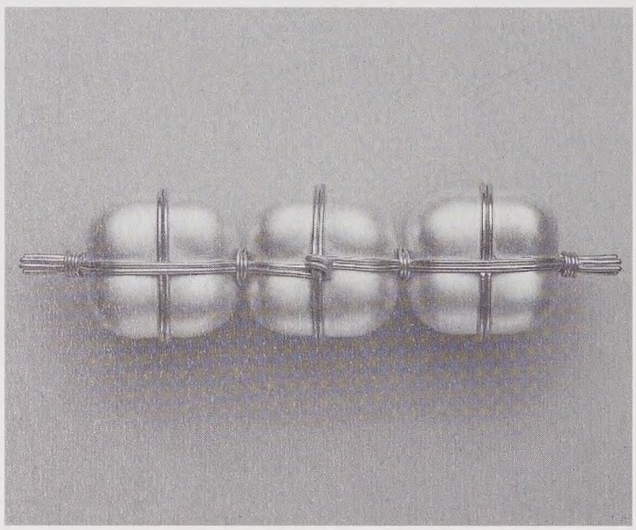

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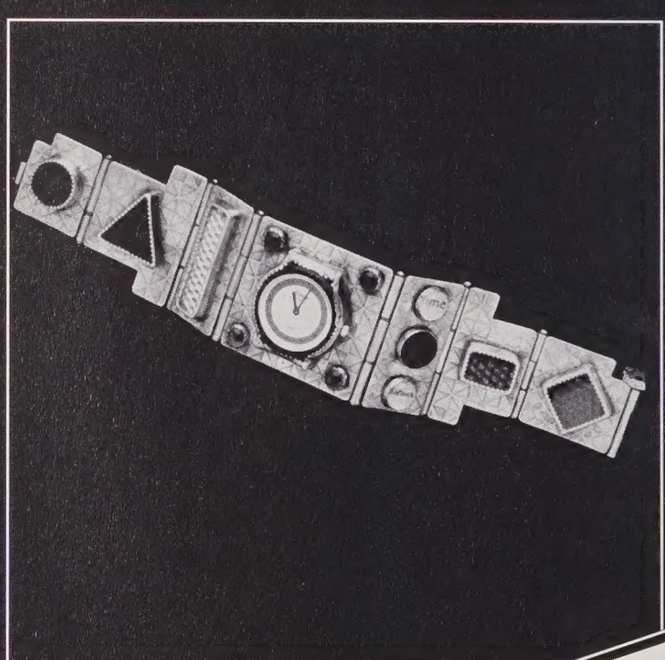

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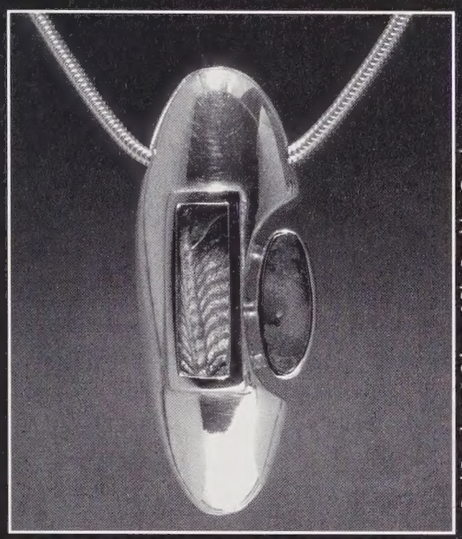

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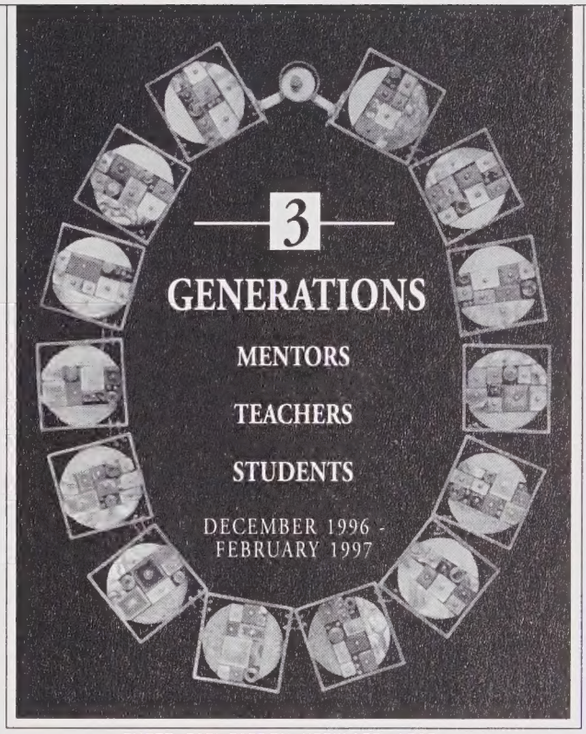

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Thomas Madden, MFA
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Jan. 25 - March 29, 1997

Paul Malmendeir, MFA
Enameled Silver Eggs & Miniatures
April 12 - June 21, 1997

Mary Douglas, MFA
Commemorative Objects
July 19 - Sept. 20, 1997

Lisa Norton, MFA
Functional Things
Oct. 4 - Dec. 19, 1997

Metalsmith, MFA
Metal Objects
Jan. 24 - March 28, 1998

Karen Hay-Steuer, MFA
Funeral Urns
April 4 - June 27, 1998

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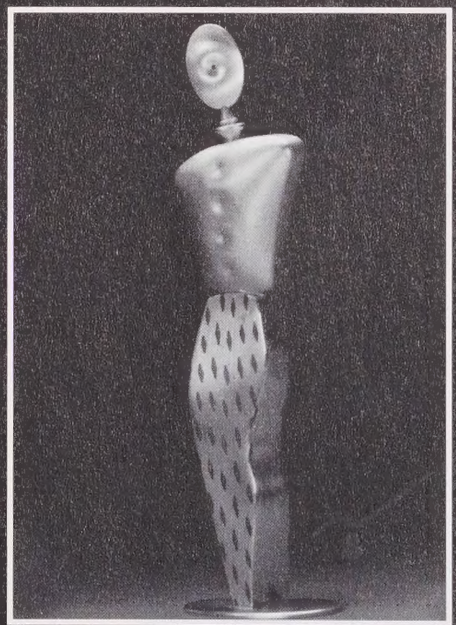

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Editorial

Recently I have been following the debate in publishing and scholarship regarding the increasing lack of footnotes in academic publications. It seems that many publishers feel that footnotes appear to most readers to be too pedantic and books with footnotes do not sell as well as those without. To many who came of age in an academic environment this repudiation of the citation of sources threatens their heritage. To many more members of the general public, the elimination of innumerable op cits and ibids probably comes as not only welcome relief but as a reasonable demand on authors to develop their own ideas and to not rely on the endless citation of other people's opinions.

Apart from my understandable interest in this issue as an editor of a publication which always seeks to satisfy a broad and diverse audience, I can not help but see this debate as a parallel to some of the many discussions I have had with both the producers and critics of jewelry and metalsmithing. A frequent topic in these conversations has been the role of originality, influence, borrowing, copying, and what some refer to as the ripping-off of a colleague or another metalsmith. While recognizing the disastrous effects such ripping-off can have on the marketplace for a craftsperson's works, I have still often found myself defending the dynamic importance of borrowing and embracing the influence of others in one's own work. It was not until the debate around footnotes started that I recognized a reasonable compromise for metalsmiths.

What is needed are footnotes on works of art. First of all the educational value of such a system would help to record the history of our field. A footnote would help the patron understand the continuity of metalsmithing. An acknowledgment of the influence of Arline Fisch or Stanley Lechtzin on a work would help people see the evolution of a particular technique and to understand technique as a vocabulary that is able to convey many different ideas and attitudes. A citation of a particular source would enable viewers/wearers to grasp the complexity of metalsmithing, the variations on a theme or process that create a richer dialogue. Employing such references would also require that the artist take responsibility for their influences. The viewer would be able to compare the influence to the source. If the artist failed to add anything new to the dialogue or was unable to effectively engage his or her sources in a distinctive enough manner, then the viewer could easily judge such lapses and understand the work to be simply an uninspired knock-off of another's work.

A footnote also precludes the sole ownership of an idea or technique, while preserving an innovator's place in history. We have all frequently heard the old cliché: "there is nothing new under the sun". What a footnote confirms, however, is that there may well be an infinite number of possible arrangements of those fixed number of ideas and techniques. Our culture frequently puts so much emphasis on the first occurrence of a phenomena that it precludes complex and exciting considerations of subsequent examples. A footnote would eliminate arguments about precedents so that artists and patrons alike could engage in serious conversations regarding what was in front of them at the moment.

A craftsperson unwilling to acknowledge their sources and influences is either a craftsperson who is insecure in their own creativity or one who is hubristic and solipsistic. The only other excuse for refusing to embrace and laud one's sources of inspiration is to dupe the marketplace and in that case it seems that we are discussing nothing less than theft.

Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your attitudes towards this polemic, I have not yet thought of a way to institute footnotes on works of jewelry. But you can be reassured that one of the goals of this magazine will be to present the history and contemporary practices of this field in such a way that at least our readers will see the footnotes between the lines.

FCL

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Cover
Pat Flynn
Bracelet, 1996
iron, 22k, 18k, opal
2¼ x 2½ x ¼"
Photograph by Ralph Gabriner
See page 10

Above
Anna Jaquez
Los Comadres, (detail of facade), 1994
metal, wood, prismacolors,
paint, electrical components
2½ x 3¾ x 5½"
See page 44

San Antonio Figure, (detail)
See page 22

Recent Sightings

Bruce Metcalf

The Curse of Perfection

The spirit of functionalism guided cutting-edge design and craft for about half of this century. Functionalism is "the notion that objects made to be used should be simple, honest, and direct; well adapted to their purpose; bare of ornament; standardized; machine-made; and reasonably priced; and expressive of their structure and materials."[1] The first center of functionalist design was Germany, where the emphasis was on factory production. Hoping to create a new design sensibility for the masses, pioneers like Marcel Breuer, Le Corbusier, and Charles and Ray Eames followed the German model and embraced machine production. Many of their designs, especially for seating, have never been equaled: Breuer's cantilevered *B-32* steel tube chair and the Eames's molded plywood lounge chair are still in production today.

It was the particular genius of the Scandinavians to adapt functionalism to handwork and to give a human face to standardization. Where much German design was intended to be made in factories by semi-skilled laborers, Scandinavian designers sought a role for master craftsmen. Where German design was often rigid and geometric, Scandinavian design was softened, with sensuous curves and parts flowing into one another. Otherwise, the functionalist doctrine remained intact.

One of the greatest accomplishments of Scandinavian metalwork is the George Jensen silver pitcher *Kande #992*, designed in 1952 by Henning Koppel. You can see how the spirit of functionalism informs the design: there is no ornamental detail at all; the polished surfaces reveal the character of silver; and the functional needs of a pouring vessel have been imaginatively and effectively met. The Scandinavian genius has two components: first, *Kande #992* is made by hand, by extraordinarily skilled craftsmen. In fact, the asymmetrical shape justified the handcraft because such irregular forms could not be made efficiently by machine. And, of course, it's beautiful. Each curve flows gracefully into another, just as the handle merges with the body of the pitcher. The combination of extraordinary craft and exceptional beauty makes *Kande #992* a model of excellence for all modern silversmiths, and a yardstick against which to measure later accomplishments.

In postwar America, silversmiths embraced the Scandinavian version of functionalism with an almost religious fervor. Many smiths thought of themselves as pioneers in bringing this new taste to America. *Kande #992* itself was well-known here; it was pictured on the cover of the August 1952 *Craft Horizons*. The man who made the prototype for *Kande #992* at the Jensen factory, Hans Christensen, came to teach at the School for American Craftsmen in 1954, and his students eventually taught and designed all over the country. By 1955, most American silversmiths worked in the Scandinavian style, or something very much like it. Their work was well-made, useful, and beautiful. Furthermore, functionalism was supposed to infallibly represent the industrial age. One might have thought the softened functionalism of such contemporary silversmithing had a bright future. What could stop it?

Instead, the Scandinavian idea of silversmithing ossified, and was pushed to the margins within 15 years. Why? Why didn't this meeting of rationality and handwork last forever?

By 1960, American silversmithing was moving away from the straightforward answering of physical needs and towards more sculptural forms. Teapots sprouted pedestals, grew ever more inventive handles, and became taller. Forms became ever more quirky and baroque, increasingly disconnected from the simplicity demanded by pure functionalism. By 1970, leading metalsmiths had turned to other pursuits: John Prip was making non-functional boxes; Fred Woell had already made his hugely influential found-object jewelry; and Brent Kington had started investigating blacksmithing. Students were producing what could only be regarded as sculpture under the guise of silversmithing. In five more years, the transition was complete.

I think that examples like *Kande #992* were just too perfect: they allowed no room for any further growth. The problem of designing pleasing, utilitarian silverware was solved so brilliantly by Henning Koppel, and executed so well by the Jensen craftsmen, that additional progress was impossible. The apex of functional handmade silversmithing had been achieved. The American silversmith might aspire to the same level of technical expertise, or try to design with the same level of sophistication, but he or she could never do better. As a result, Americans lost interest in following the dictates of functionalism. Instead of seeking perfection, Americans sought expression.

In time, the historical moment for Scandinavian-modern style silverware passed. While some of the wonderful Henning Koppel designs are still produced, they are now classics, much like Mies van der Rohe's *Barcelona Chair*. While these designs remain highly desirable, and they still look great in a contemporary interior, they clearly don't come from the present time. For today's designer, these designs are part of history, and are thus available for quotation and pastiche. But it is mysteriously difficult to *sincerely* attempt to produce new, elegant, functionalist objects. I can think of only a handful in the past decade. In addition, I have not met a single student in the past ten years who aspired to make beautiful, useful, and unassuming silverware. Their aspirations aim toward something else: usually art.

Functionalism is far from dead, however. For instance, automobile design is largely determined by functionalist principles. Cars clearly reflect changing technologies as well as various social and environmental conditions: the cost of gasoline along with front-wheel drive technology has changed the shape and size of automobiles everywhere.

Functionalism also informs the design of airplanes, computers, and even sports equipment. What's odd is that no analogous changes have swept through metalworking. No radically new functionalist metalsmithing has emerged in the past quarter century.

Perhaps it's because there are few new technologies to drive the craft of silversmithing forward. Perhaps it's because the old missionary spirit is gone, after all, functionalism has penetrated to every level of mass production. Perhaps it's because the few remaining customers for silversmithing want jazzy design because they recognize that the purpose of such expensive ware is not for everyday use, but for show. But perhaps it's also because nobody gets inspired anymore. After all, it's discouraging to stand in the shadow of perfection.

Bruce Metcalf is a jewelry-maker and writer in Philadelphia. He is curating the jewelry and metalsmithing segment of the American Craft Museum's upcoming exhibition, The Studio Craft Movement 1945 – 1965.

[1]George H. Marcus, *Functionalist Design: An Ongoing History,* Prestel-Verlag, Munich and New York, 1995.

Ronald Pearson

Jeweler and Metalsmith 1924 – 1996

Ronald Pearson was one of the founding members of SNAG, a role much in keeping with his lifetime of involvement with and service to the field of metals. His studio/shop on Deer Isle was a mecca for young people seeking to make their livelihood as artists in metal. Ron, in his generosity and genuine interest, always had time for them, time to show them his work, to share his studio and expertise, to chat about the joys and rigors of the lifestyle he had chosen. Such visits were often a highlight of metal sessions at Haystack when Ron would welcome students to browse freely through the studio, the house, the garden, the blacksmithing forge, while he patiently answered questions. From time to time he employed some of those who found his shop so welcoming, and his forge was made available to a number of young blacksmiths as they gained experience enough to go out on their own.

Ron spent his life working in metal, happy to make simple and good things for people, to buy and enjoy. He loved to forge and form metal directly, but he also adopted those practices which enabled him to support himself and his family with his work. His entire adult life was lived as a full-time producing artist, making graceful and elegant jewelry of bold linear form as well as accepting private and corporate commissions which enabled him to expand the scale and scope of his work. He also worked, at times, as a freelance designer of both flatwear and jewelry for commercial production.

He received an honorary doctorate from the Portland School of Art for his valuable contributions to American jewelry design, and for his "quiet conviction, sensitivity, and unending commitment to excellence". In October he will be awarded a Gold Medal for Excellence from the American Craft Council, the highest honor bestowed upon an American craftsman by his peers. He knew about the award and was very pleased.

Ron never lost his love for the sea; his favorite relaxation was taking off for an afternoon of sailing on Eggemoggin Reach just down the road from his studio. His many friends and colleagues wish him a fair wind and smooth sailing.

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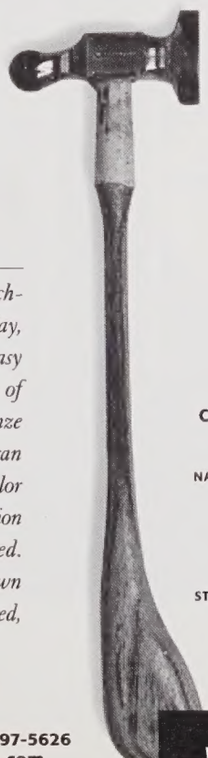

CLAIRE SANFORD IS A JEWELER/METALSMITH AND PARTNER IN TOP DOG STUDIO WITH HER HUSBAND CHARLES CROWLEY. SHE EXHIBITS NATIONALLY AND DIVIDES HER TIME BETWEEN STUDIO WORK, TEACHING AND WRITING.

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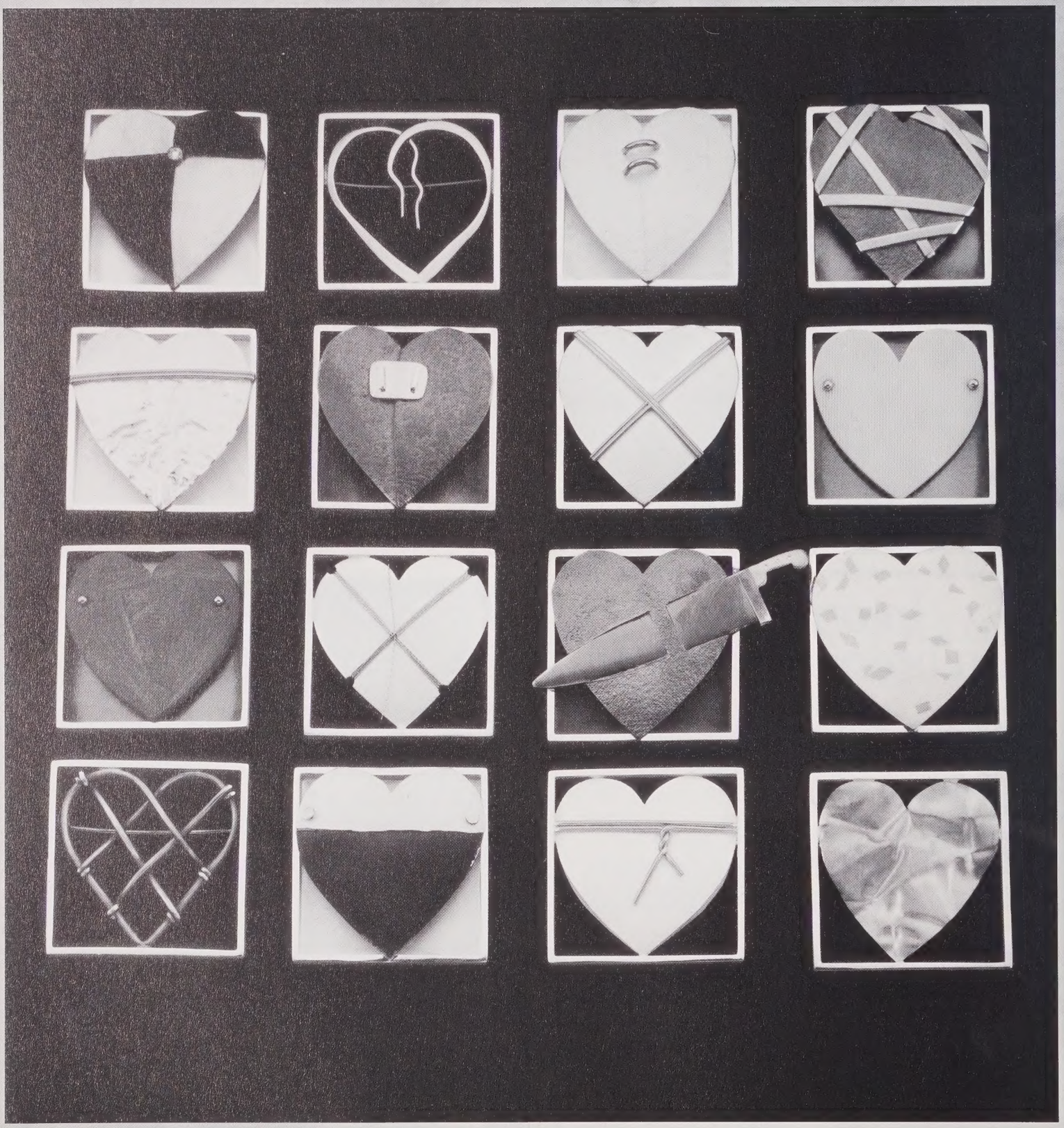


Pat Flynn

Making Things Right

Text: Marjorie Simon

"There are jobs, there are chores, and there is work."

Donald Hall.[1]

Everybody knows Pat Flynn. Pat Flynn, the *jewelerly* jeweler.[2] Pat Flynn the goldsmith's goldsmith. The bear of a man from whose impossibly long fingers come those impossibly tiny hinges. The New Paltz student whose folded copper sacks amused us, whose slate brooches made people use words like transformational, whose rusty nails with gold accoutrements were followed by beakers of pewter, silver, and gold. Now the hand-forged nails, studded with diamonds, draped with pearls, wrapped with gold. And the hearts, always the hearts. For twenty years Pat Flynn has given us jewelry to wear forever because he believes jewelry is for wearing.

The boy who was born to a Pennsylvania dairy farmer and found refuge from the harshness of farm life by making models and customizing his match box cars grew up to make his own tools and pour his own gold. Along the way he acquired what many have characterized as a "near-European aesthetic." But the formative dailyness of farm work and the sheer necessity of doing things in order, just the doing of them, became the crucible of Pat Flynn's world view. As if to explain himself, Flynn refers to *Clabbered Dirt, Sweet Grass*, Gary Paulsen's elegiac memoir of farm life and the dailyness of tasks, but even more, a valentine to the sense memories of childhood, seasons, and, always, work.

Being habituated to work has enabled Pat Flynn to do what had to be done to support the family he had even as an undergraduate, whether it was construction, factory work, or benchwork for other jewelers. But always a few days a week were reserved for his personal vision, the playful, the witty, the unlikely pairing of materials, the tweaking of what jewelry was all about in "the industry." All the while, Flynn honed his skills ("I wanted to be Whitney Boin") by just doing it.[3] In the end his willingness to remain in the background has brought him to the forefront, so that the brief history of American art jewelry now includes Pat Flynn.

To many people that name means a silver frame barely more than an inch square enclosing a voluptuous heart. After a decade in the public eye, the heart pins still provoke critics and public alike. They just won't go away. At one time a collection of four heart pins represented Flynn's only sale at Rhinebeck. Now they represent the marriage of commerce and art. Are they but one idea infinitely repeated? Too formulaic?[4] Audiences are both fickle and deeply conservative. Critics clamor for change but the continued commercial success of the hearts says the public wants a sure thing. Impatience for the new is the dark side of the artist's ambivalent relationship with the marketplace.

Heart Pins
sterling, 18k, nickel,
platinum, slate, bone, diamond
1¼ x 1¼ x ⅛" (each)
Photograph by Alex Casler

The image may be familiar, but even the simplest pins are not what they seem. They spring to life in your hand as you press the steel pin stem to release it from its fabricated catch, the sensory shock a delight that is just what Flynn intended. Each one is different, and despite a certain preciousness creeping in with the use of gold, platinum, and, yes, a heart-shaped pearl, the individual designs still have something to say. They also represent the closest Flynn comes to narrative. While the rest of his work is formal and modernist, the hearts have stories and titles. *Susan* is pierced with nails, *Gate* opens and closes with a working catch, like a miniature reliquary; its predecessor might be the 15th century gold hat ornament with doors that open to a scene of the Annunciation. A classic French chef's knife pierces one silvery heart "because most fights start in the kitchen." But some viewers see this as a dagger, or relate it to their own surgery. Despite the scores of hearts Flynn has produced in the past ten years, he still has the first two: one of flat, woven wire with no soldering, and one volumetric, wrapped with a soldered, hand-coiled pin stem. Meanwhile, the hearts are paying the mortgage and building Flynn's new studio. Characteristically, Flynn does what he must to be able to do what he wants.

By the time Terri Lonier's profile of Pat Flynn appeared in these pages in 1983, he had already made a series of little copper sacks, a significant collection of slate brooches, and his first nail pin.[5] This was a gnarled nail with a gold pin stem soldered directly onto it with two gold nuggets and a Biwa pearl. He had exhibited in *Young Americans* 1980, and put in several years at the bench of industry designers. During these years the nails were a way for Flynn to get beyond the superficial in using salvaged materials. They also provided welcome relief from the *soulless* jewelry he worked on in New York. "When I got back to my studio the last thing I wanted to do was make perfect polished things....I was drawn to slate, busted pieces of glass, saw blades and nails, bits of iron. I'd take my garbage to the landfill and come back with a bunch of cool stuff to make jewelry with."

Necklace, 1996
iron, 22k, 18k, pearl
7½ x 5¼ x ¼"
Photograph by Ralph Gabriner

By the time the seminal exhibition *Jewelry USA* opened in 1984, Flynn's mastery of the brooch form was well under way. In a review Lisa Norden stated she was looking for a "point of view", some evidence that the maker has gotten beyond a fascination with the NEW and has something to say.[6] She noted Rose Slivka's criticism of American jewelers who "appropriate and decontextualize stylistic or esthetic effects, while disregarding the sources that inspired them."[7] Such energetic assimilation of multiple viewpoints is at once the strength and curse of the American approach to jewelry-making. Flynn's attitude – flawless construction with hand-of-the-maker finishing, the *touch* he values – has not changed in the intervening decade since Norden observed that: "Flynn is exceptional in his ability to coax profound meaning from precious and discarded matter, alike. His inspired compositions establish absolute equivalencies between the most unlikely materials and shapes."[8] Norden noted that Flynn's pin, while utilizing the now common juxtaposition of uncommon materials, manifests an equivalence of precious and non-precious. Flynn makes this work because he confronts equivalence directly, rather than relying solely on the superficial contrast of materials. What emerges is a true dialectic, a duality that implies dynamic equilibrium, not just dividing the world into opposing groups.

A stroll through Flynn's personal collection reveals the turnings that the artist himself often misses in telling his own story. Flynn's first forged pieces were completed with Ronald Pearson at Haystack, and show the early promise of delicacy of form and sinuous forged line. Flynn's use of line turns out to be a hallmark of his design, regardless of medium or stylistic change. A small shepherd's crook is held together with tension at the top, anticipating by twenty years the nail bracelets that snap together. Not surprisingly, even his student work shows the Flynn touch: tiny hinges, handmade findings, the burnished edge. A large pearl isn't attached with a wrapped wire, but with another tiny hinge. A sheet or strip of metal is never used where a tiny rivet or fragment of wire will do the job, so that pins are light and airy.

Even early pieces that don't quite work, such as an early slate fragment partially framed in sterling silver with a gold nugget on the surface, show the same care for detail and surface. One edge is reinforced from behind, so that it is more substantial. Even with simple forms there is much to see: layers and levels, a shaft of light piercing the gold surface because of the lintel that is raised just enough above the overlapping planes. Pins that would otherwise be just squares have soft edges and barely perceptible interstices which leaven the solid form and allow a line of light to cross. This is the same mentality that a dozen years later created a heart-shaped opening behind a diamond on a ring that would otherwise be just a little too *Cartier*.

During the 1980's Flynn continued his contemplation of the brooch form. Many pins from this time are intimate squares of silver, gold, slate, and precious gems, and most have the characteristic Flynn *line*, which often serves to segment the form into two halves. Like the bifurcate tablets Moses carried, both halves of these pins have equal valence. Cleaved from top to bottom with a linear element (there's that line again), the vertical nearly separates the two halves, like a rift not quite healed. Many pins are visually held together by a stitch, or rivets, or just a suggestion of surgical suture. By its vertical dichotomy, this arrangement creates not only equivalencies, but what Kandinsky has called a position of "warm rest", or, that of "the greatest contrast."[9] Contrast being the basis of drama, Flynn aims for "that sort of tension that's created [in]...a real strong form that's handled in a real fragile fashion."

Necklace, 1996
iron, 18k, platinum, diamonds
7¾ x 5¼ x ¼"
Photograph by Ralph Gabriner

Flynn's achievement of intimacy and technical mastery rests on a foundation of thousands of years of European goldsmithing. "As a forger of [metals]...and as a powerful, creative agent of change, the smith...often appears as a ruler over fire, as a healer of diseases and as a rainmaker..."[10] Egyptian reliefs from the First Dynasty show smiths at work. Gold is mentioned in the very first chapter of Genesis, chain-making in Exodus. The 12th century monk Theophilus devoted seventy-nine chapters to the art of the goldsmith in his description of the arts of his time. "The goldsmith was required to be a modeller, sculptor, smelter, enameller, jewel-mounter and inlay-worker."[11] As if personally bearing the weight of 3,000 years of tradition, Flynn was slow to accept the mantle of goldsmith for himself. Asked to name his heroes, he chooses the Italian master Mario Pinton.

Pinton's Italian sensibility was once described by Arline Fisch in a way that applies no less to Pat Flynn: "...bold simplicity of form, classical proportion and finesse of surface texture and finish – a machine precision accomplished by hand....[Pinton himself] is essentially a humanist. A jeweler who cares about the wearer as the ultimate goal, he combines restraint in execution with innovation in form and expression."[12] Flynn's colleagues use this same vocabulary to describe his work, and Flynn himself says: "jewelry is made for people to wear, and it should be warm, and that warmth is real important for me....Otherwise, make objects." Fisch describes a Pinton bracelet as "tense with implied movement, rather like a spring poised on the arm, arrested momentarily....[in a brooch,] one small stone focuses the energy of the linear composition and invests the brooch with a monumentality quite contradictory to its actual size."[13] These descriptions perfectly characterize Flynn's 1995 collection.

More often Flynn is compared with Hermann Junger and the German school to which Flynn aspired in his early years. But once he had achieved that level of technical expertise, Flynn found it emotionally unsatisfying, as he preferred the "rawness of parts being incredibly skillfully handled and other parts left ragged or left with just the saw cut, or file marks, but perfectly, beautifully constructed...." Still, philosophically he remains close to the European model. In catalogue notes for Junger's *Jewelry as a Sign Language*, Helmut Friedel notes that, for Junger, "jewelry takes on its own real meaning when intimate relation is established between the wearer and the object worn." Flynn says simply, "I hope people just wear these things out, enriching their lives with it..., all that other life that the pieces have after they leave my hands".

These pieces begin life in Flynn's workmanlike sketchbooks, each page filled with process, as if talking to himself, and in a quieter way one can see ideas being turned over and over in his mind. They also contain the germs of Flynn's philosophy of art and life, as he muses to himself at the end of the day. On the last page of one large spiral bound pad he writes that "the back of the piece may be the most important part. What doesn't appear in the slide. Like the unseen, what doesn't appear in people may be the most important as well, the part that doesn't show, what people hide....The people who take the time to flip the piece over, actually get to see the guts, the underbelly, the bottom of a turtle, the insides of a really fine watch. They get to see my world...." Like the artist himself, the sketchbooks are private, some measurements, precise renderings of ideas, but in a way always something a little held back, as if proof of his belief that the magic should be saved for the bench. As Flynn works, he likes to leave a little bit unsaid; as a result people talk of his restraint. "It's important for me not to completely understand certain elements of my work." Like a Japanese potter, he believes "if you think too much things lose their spirit."

Drinking Beakers, 1990
sterling, 18k, 22k
2½ x 2½ x 3"

A recent bracelet shows how this creative process works. From a tattered folder Flynn removes a fragment of graph paper containing a drawing for a bracelet (nail, movable pearls) made while gallery sitting for Ellen Reiben at Jewelerswerk; not coincidentally, he was away from his bench with nothing else to do when the solution came to him. The drawing is a simple sketch with just a reference to an idea in a kind of shorthand, not a lively finished drawing. Details of the piece are not worked out ahead of time, so there's room for freshness to remain in the work. Once he had the basic design, Flynn made a silver model, going back to an earlier, problematic bracelet for reference. He knew from fixing pocket watches that much of the success of a catch is in the hinge, and that the average person might break a clasp only another jeweler would understand. Building catches became "almost like a puzzle.... Then they got simpler and more sophisticated and the hinges were built in so they were flush." Hence the hinge is so subtle that not only will the average person not break it, but another jeweler is often hard pressed to find it. The latest bracelets show the evolution of multiple approaches to problem-solving and the gradual refinement of technical achievement.

Far left
Necklace, 1990
iron, 18k, diamond, cable
3" lenght

Left
Brooch, 1991
iron, 22k, diamonds
3 x 1 x ⅜"

They also document Flynn's romance with the nail, culminating in the single sweep of black line that forms the latest necklaces and bracelets. Flynn has pursued the semiotics and aesthetics of the nail through permutations of found object (Duchamp's *ready-made*) to the formality of pure line in his current body of work. Through sheer volume of work produced, he has laid claim to the nail. As a cultural object, what could be more mundane? At least 3,000 years before the Romans made nails famous as a deterrent to crime, artists in Mesopotamia "used them to fasten sheets of copper to wooden frames to make statues."[14] Now machines spew out 500 nails per minute, but not too long ago they were made by hand. Flynn knows his history, and without being didactic he manages to recall a time when nails were always "hand-wrought...children's work. They'd sit around the hearth at night and forge nails by hand....During the big land rush [people] burnt their buildings down to take their nails with them to build new buildings....Those things were so incredibly important to them...."

Such knowledge informs Flynn's treatment of these slender rods of iron. In fact, we may be tempted to overlook the fact that the nail is a *nail*, because it has been transformed into an object of ordinary beauty, transformed from object to ornament. Flynn's jewelry is both about the nail and about jewelry, in the way Abstract Expressionism is about paint. A hand-forged nail is layered with meaning from a sensory-rich past in which the air sang with the blows of the blacksmith's hammer. Flynn eliminates the voyeurism of found objects by forging his own nails. He can "hollow them all out and solder in platinum tubes....I like that sort of trickster-fox sensibility, sort of upping the ante....I like the idea that what they're really all about is not so evident up front."

Left, top to bottom

Bracelet, 1995
iron, 22k, 18k, platinum, ruby
2 x 2½ x ½"

Work Song Rings, 1995
iron, 22k, 18k, pearls
¾ x ¼ to ½"

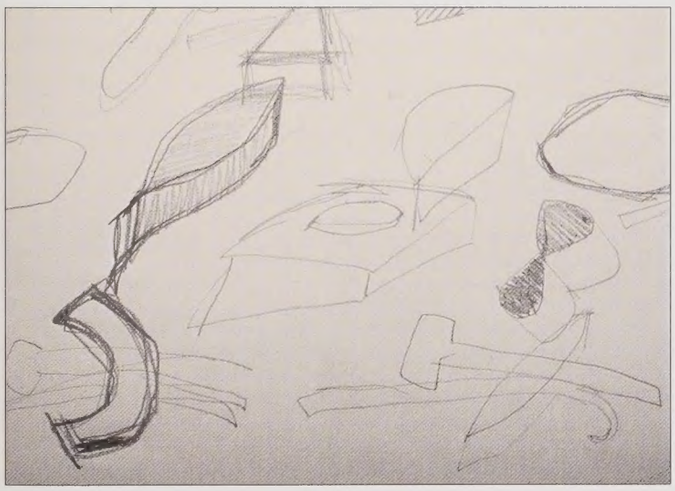
Bracelet, 1993
iron, 18k, pearls
2¾ x 3 x ½"

Copper Sacks, 1979
copper, cinnamon
2 x 1½ x ¼" (average size)

Photographs by Ralph Gabriner

Flynn uses the nail to continue his exploration of a visual dialectic that has intrigued him for years, keeping the implied tension using the simplest of forms, the line. Over time, each jewelry form – brooch, bracelet, neckpiece – has grown more confident than its predecessors. Like a late Beethoven quartet, they seem distilled and purified to the very nature of their form. The bracelets in particular have come into their maturity after years of experimentation. Thinner, lighter, more spare, and more elegant, they are now more than ever about the line. Even more than the nail/diamond/gold brooches of a few years back, they represent the best of the many ideas Flynn has confronted with his materials. There's temporality in the eternal gold and transitory iron; gender, even class, are represented in the resolutely blue-collar iron and elite, noble gold. The mythology of the diamond itself, the perfect crystal, holds that it can "cure disease, render poisons impotent...make one invisible, and grant men good luck with women."[15] Naturally occurring South Sea pearls recall, as well, our marine origins and salty, fishy sexuality. Flynn's choices seem single-handedly to prove "what metalworkers believe material to be influences what they make."[16] Each fluid black line ends in a different clasp articulated by a gold hinge. A nail end slips past the head to snap into a box clasp, or snakes around a ruby tear drop, to slide into its gold housing. One opens like a pirate's chest; another tapered end snaps into a volumetric fabricated leaf that swivels to accommodate it. A square ruby slots into an opening in a hinged clasp adorned with telltale crosshatched file marks, the entire confection so smooth it will never snag the hairs on your wrist.

Equally wearable is a necklace forged of a single nail; direct and sensual, it wraps right around the head and lays lightly on the collarbone. Even a massive hollow nail brooch inlaid with forty-three diamonds miraculously curves along its vertical axis to accommodate the wearer's body. Nearly invisible mechanisms underscore a sympathetic physicality, for example, the way the springy metal snaps onto the clasp or pops out of its tubular closure. Seemingly controlled, the gestural line threatens to spring open and release its energy. Paradoxes of modern life are expressed in pairing iron, which only seems permanent and unyielding, with truly enduring gold and diamonds. These elements (Au, Fe, C) are gouged out of the same earth we walk and to which we return.



Page from sketchbook

Although tangentially related to the nails-with-diamonds of only two years ago, the new work shows a startling freshness. Jolted by life changes – losses sustained in divorce, auto theft of all his tools, and relocation from New Paltz to the Washington, DC area – Flynn has perhaps unwittingly turned a corner in his work. The vocabulary of the bracelets and necklaces has moved far beyond the Celtic-inspired torque of years past, through the superficial, more self-conscious pairing of nails and gold from his 1991 work. He even updates a classic brooch of gold, precious gem, and linear embellishment by making the line a brazen, hand-forged nail that spirals the coiled energy right off the plane, past a triangular opal of shocking green. Making bracelets from nails is a way for Flynn to involve men in his dialogue; he wears them himself. Unlike a pin attached to clothing, the nail bracelets and necklaces are worn directly on the body. Flesh and iron interact temporally in an intimate confrontation of mortality and longevity. Together they might even represent, for Flynn at forty, a connection between the historical tradition of smithing and his personal values as a maker of objects.

Flynn's jewelry is unrepentantly beautiful, but by using the proletarian nail and by hand-finishing, he avoids what might otherwise be a retrogressive celebration of the merely decorative. Nor does he harangue the viewer with his commentary of utility and beauty, but like the best of craft, creates a bridge between the visual/masculine and the tactile/feminine sensibility. Without a hint of postmodern self-reference, a Flynn necklace or bracelet has everything the late 20th century audience could want. Sex? A slender terminus nestles in the cleft of the hollowed out nail head. Violence? The iron is beaten by its creator's mighty arm to a submissive taper. Add style (with substance), color, wit, movement, history, even intrinsic value, all within an object that could conceivably be worn without feeling self-conscious. Democratic material origins perform an upwardly mobile dance to uncontested aesthetic achievement. Without relying on the iconography of popular culture, Flynn injects an American freshness into a decidedly European respect for craftsmanship.

Brooch, 1996
iron, diamonds, platinum
6¼ x ¼ x ¼"

But ultimately it is the relational aspect of jewelry-making that attracts Pat Flynn. "I like the fact that people wear jewelry. I like the intimate scale. That although an object can be diminutive it can have a tremendous power and soul. I like the human connection to jewelry...the way jewelry is very important to people." The extent to which Pat Flynn's jewelry continues to draw us into his journey will determine his focus in the marketplace. It is his place because he values mastery, accepts the dailyness of routine labor, and comprehends the redemptive power of work.

The author gratefully acknowledges editorial feedback from Shellie Jacobson, Ann Parkin, Don Friedlich, and Judith Mitchell.

Majorie Simon is a critic, writer, and jeweler who lives in Highland Park, New Jersey.

Notes

1 Donald Hall, *Life Work*, Beacon Press, 1993.
2 Bruce Metcalf, *Metalsmith*, vol.14 #3, 1994, p. 6.
3 This and all unattributed quotes taken from conversations with the artist in February, 1996. For an eloquent statement of Flynn's philosophy in his own words see *Metalsmith 1994 Exhibition in Print*, p.17.
4 For criticism, see reviews of Pat Flynn by Deb Stoner, *Metalsmith*, Summer 1989, p. 43 and Matthew Kangas, *Metalsmith*, Fall, 1993, p.45.
5 Terri Lonier, "Giant Energy in a Little Precious Thing." *Metalsmith*, Fall, 1983, pp. 28-30.
6 Linda Norden, "Review of Jewelry USA," *Metalsmith*, Fall, 1984, pp. 8–15.
7 ibid.
8 ibid.
9 Vasily Kandinsky, *Point And Line To Plane*, Dover Books, New York, 1979, p. 130.
10 Udo Becker. *The Continuum Encyclopedia Of Symbols*, Continuum, New York, 1994, p. 273.
11 *Artwork In Gold And Silver*, Handbooks of Practical Art. Henry B. Wheatley, New York, 1882, p. 133.
12 Arline Fisch, "Goldsmiths of the Veneto", *American Craft*, Dec. 1987/Jan. 1988, p. 40.
13 Ibid., p.41.
14 *World Book Encyclopedia*, Vol 14, 1982, p.4.
15 Becker, op. cit. p.83.
16 G. Griffin and E. Stefanutti, "Remaking Materials", 1995 SNAG presentation, p. 26.

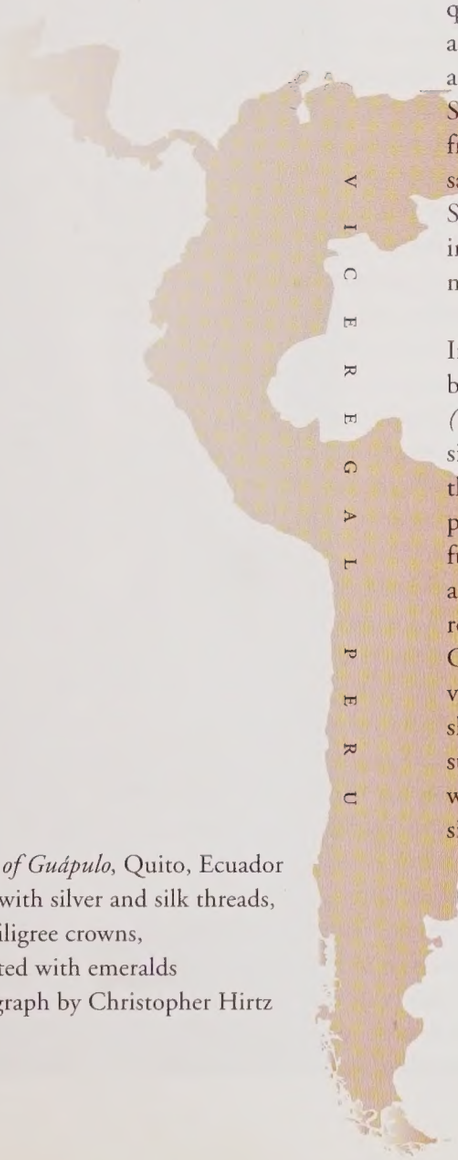
The Silversmith's Art in VICEREGAL PERU

TEXT: MARTHA EGAN

In sixteenth-century Viceregal Peru, the area claimed by Spain that originally encompassed all of South America save for Brazil, unique factors created a climate highly favorable to the silversmith's art. Over the next three hundred years of Spanish rule, master metalsmiths produced a body of work of impressive craftsmanship and beauty rarely equaled elsewhere at any point in recorded history. Yet, Viceregal Peruvian silver is little known outside the region, and relatively few examples have survived the vicissitudes of time.

At the time of the Conquest, Central and South American artisans had mastered a variety of techniques for working metals: gold, silver, copper, platinum, and mixed metals such as *tumbaga* (a copper-gold alloy), and bronze. Although pre-Conquest metalsmiths used only a few types of stone and copper tools, they surpassed European craftsmen in many aspects of the metalsmith's art. For example, the Indians of coastal Ecuador were able to work platinum via the incipient fusion or sintering method, a technique lost after the conquest, that was developed independently in Europe only in the nineteenth century. As early as 1,000 B.C.E., Chavín artisans in the highlands of northern Peru were hammering and annealing sheet gold into ornaments and vessels decorated with elaborate high relief work. Somewhat later, the lost-wax process became a favorite technique of a number of cultures from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego, as was hollow-casting. In many areas of the Americas, artisans knew how to gild copper objects and utilize a hard solder of copper and gold alloys. Shortly before the conquest, Incan metalsmiths appear to have developed a technique for inlaying metals with other metals. Inlays of shell and stones had long been a favorite technique for decorating works, particularly along the Peruvian coast.

In the centuries prior to the Conquest, a highland clan in the central Andes, the Incas, conquered peoples from Colombia south to central Chile, and east into the Amazon basin. Claiming to be descendants of the Sun, they imposed their laws, their language, *(Quechua)*, and their religion on their subject peoples from whom they gathered gold and silver as tribute. The theocratic Incas regarded gold as the "sweat of the Sun", and silver as the "tears" of Mama Killa, the mother moon, the sister-bride of the Sun. They and other pre-Hispanic cultures utilized precious metals for ceremonial, decorative, religious, and functional purposes, but not as currency or mediums of exchange. Skilled artisans used gold and silver to fashion everything from fish hooks and weaving needles to maceheads for Incan royalty. Of particular beauty were objects for the *Coricancha*, the Inca's ceremonial garden in Cusco, that was decorated with exquisitely crafted, life-size gold and silver fruit trees, plants, vegetables, animals, insects, birds, butterflies, and people.[1] Temple rooms were decorated in sheets of precious metals and molten metal was sometimes poured between the perfectly cut stones of temple walls.[2] The native taste for broad expanses of dazzling, shimmering metal, what André Emmerich terms a sheet-metal aesthetic, would continue to influence Peruvian silver- and goldsmithing into present times.



LEFT
Virgin of Guápulo, Quito, Ecuador
image with silver and silk threads,
silver filigree crowns,
encrusted with emeralds
Photograph by Christopher Hirtz

In 1532, when a small band of Spanish soldiers under the command of Francisco Pizarro landed on the northern coast of present-day Peru, they encountered a highly sophisticated society of peons, artisans, and aristocrats living in urban centers and rural agrarian settlements not unlike their own on the Iberian peninsula. Because the Incan realm was highly stratified, centralized, and in a period of political turmoil, the Spaniards, using chicanery and superior fire-power, were able to easily overcome the elites and subdue the populace quickly and effectively. The *conquistadores* looted Incan treasuries and graves. Hundreds of thousands of objects, many of dazzling workmanship, were smelted into bars for division among the soldiers, payment of the royal fifth tax to the Crown, and transport back to Europe. Although some of the more extraordinary works were allegedly set aside for Emperor Charles V of Spain, not a single documented object is known to exist today from the Peruvian conquest loot, an estimated 134,000 pounds of sliver and 17,500 pounds of gold,[3] or twice the quantity of bullion confiscated from the Aztecs a decade earlier. A royal edict issued on February 13, 1535, decreed that all gold and silver from Peru should be melted at the royal mints at Sevilla, Toledo, and Segovia.

RIGHT, TOP
Contemporary Silver Frame

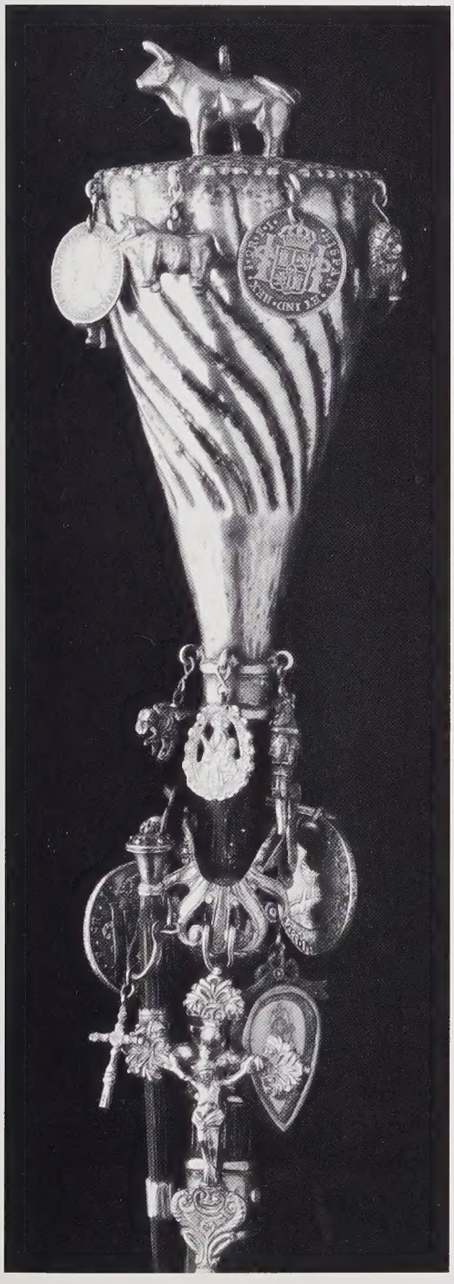
RIGHT, BOTTOM
Bastón de manda, (authority cane)
Martha J. Egan Archives

Photographs by Anthony Richardson

When the Peruvians witnessed the Spaniards' greed for precious metals, they hid their mines and artifacts from the invaders. Later, they claimed that they had concealed the greater part of their treasures from the Spaniards.[4] Indeed, were it not for the works later recovered from ancient burials by archaeologists (and unfortunately, grave robbers and looters) little would be known of the high level of sophistication achieved by metalsmiths of the pre-Hispanic era. Moreover, because the Spanish Crown customarily forbade or restricted native gold and silversmiths from practicing their crafts, certain aspects of pre-Hispanic metallurgical skills and techniques might have been lost had it not been for a remarkable discovery just thirteen years after the conquest of Peru. In 1545, a Spaniard's native servant discovered a veritable mountain of silver at Potosí, in present-day highland Bolivia. The treasures robbed from the Incan realm were but a trifle compared to the estimated 22,300 tons of silver produced by this mine alone before it became depleted around 1800.

Silver mining quickly became the most important economic activity in Viceregal Peru and Spaniards in particular amassed huge fortunes. The sheer abundance of bullion produced by Andean mines led to a lavish use of silver and gold among the colonists that achieved legendary proportions. The Church, building everywhere throughout the realm, was a primary client of silver and gold workshops. Ecclesiastical works large and small were commissioned by the Church, by the colonial government, and by wealthy colonists, who donated works to the Church. Additionally, the *nouveau riche* of Peru commissioned remarkable objects for their own use: bathtubs, chamber pots, and spittoons of raised silver, carriages completely covered in worked silver, and sumptuous private chapels. In the late 1600s, the visit of a Viceroy to Potosí was the occasion for a portion of the provincial city's streets to be paved with silver bricks.[5] In Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia), the fabulously wealthy Velazco family is said to have eaten off plates of solid gold, while their servants ate off silver. Throughout the colonial period the use of silver tableware was common, china being more valuable and more rare than sliver.

The exploitation of the deposit at Potosí and the discovery of other rich veins led to the enslavement and death of hundreds of thousands of Indian miners. Yet the Spaniards' immediate need for experienced metalsmiths necessitated their opening the profession to natives. The *ordenanzas* that regulated all phases of metal working were less strictly enforced in Peru than in other parts of the colonies. Under pressure from the prestigious and influential Spanish silver- and goldsmiths' guilds, the Spanish Crown generally forbade non-white artisans from working precious metals. However, throughout the Viceregal period in the Andes, native, black, and *mestizo* (mixed-race) artisans worked silver and gold under master craftsmen who swarmed to Peru from all parts of Spain's Empire under the Hapsburgs. Many of the early European silversmiths were immigrants from northern Germany and Flanders. Non-Europeans' membership in the metalsmiths' guilds and *cofradias* (religious confraternities) was denied or restricted. However, in areas where the Indian population was able to maintain some autonomy, such as Cusco and the Lake Titicaca region, native silversmiths were generally able to practice their craft with fewer encumbrances than those imposed on their colleagues in Lima and other European-dominated cities.



At one point, the colonial city of Lima was one-third black, and many of its metalsmiths were either black or mulatto. This population, which included indentured or freed Spanish Moors as well as slaves brought directly to the Americas from West Africa, brought with them their own skills at working metals. Gold and silver filigree work, forging, and lost-wax casting techniques, for example, were associated with this population.

Workshops were established in the principal cities of the Viceroyalty: Potosí, Lima, Santiago de Chile, Buenos Aires, Tucumán, Chuquisaca (Sucre, Bolivia), Chuquiabo (La Paz), Trujillo, Arequipa, Cusco, Huamanga (Ayacucho, Peru), Quito, Cuenca, Popayán, Santa Fe de Bogotá, Caracas, and the Jesuit missions (*reducciones*) southern Bolivia and Paraguay. While many of the master *plateros*' names are known, Viceregal Peruvian silver is often unmarked. Assayers' marks are also absent from much of the plate, unlike in the Viceroyalty of New Spain (Mexico and Central America), where regulations governing metal purity and the collection of the Royal Fifth tax were more strictly enforced.

In terms of style, Viceregal Peruvian silver generally reflects the *mestizaje* of races that characterized the population of the region, and draws its influences from Native American, European, Black African and Moorish metalsmithing traditions. Over the three-hundred year colonial period, silver and gold work incorporated a variety of styles, forms, and regional differences. Nevertheless, work of the region shares three primary characteristics: a lavish use of the metal, an exuberance of style, and a high level of craftsmanship. The work is further distinguished by certain characteristic forms and decorative elements.

George Kubler, one of the most important of the present-day Latin American art historians, maintains that what distinguishes North and South American colonial period crafts from their European counterparts is their "strong surface ... generously measured out from the marvelous abundance of raw materials in America.[6] In Kubler's opinion, European silver of the period, while technically superb, presents a deliberately weak surface. Silversmiths strived for delicacy and fineness in their work. By contrast, even small silver and gold objects of the colonial period in South America are weighty and prepossessing. Silversmiths had an indulgent and enthusiastic clientele, abundant raw materials, and the assistance of cheap apprentices – factors that enabled them to sometimes lavish years on a single work. At least for the aristocracy and artisans, the colonial era in South America was generally an epoch of peace and prosperity. Given the *right patron,* no work was too costly, too difficult to craft, or too time consuming for a master *platero* and his workshop.

Viceregal Peruvian metalsmithing styles reflected European fashions, specifically those of Seville, although artistic currents lagged behind those of the mother country and tended to last longer, especially in rural areas. At the time of the Conquest, Spain's artistic center, Seville, was itself at the confluence of many artistic currents, chief among them being that of the Italian renaissance then predominant throughout Europe. Southern Spain, however, as the last Moorish bastion in Europe, was still somewhat under the sway of Arabic tastes. Plateresque style, which evolved in Seville and was popularized by the Arfes, a fifteenth-and sixteenth-century dynasty of German-originated silversmiths, incorporated many Arabic conventions in its characteristic elaborate foliage, floral bas-reliefs, and arabesques. *Plateresco* proved particularly popular in the Americas during the first two centuries of colonial rule.

By 1680, however, the initial purity of European design, as transferred to the Americas by master silversmiths from Seville, was supplanted in the Andes by a baroque style that differed in important ways from the European baroque. According to Bolivian art historian Teresa Gisbert, *mestizo* baroque as it evolved combined European and indigenous elements: the Greco-Roman classicism as interpreted by the renaissance, Christian tradition and iconography, pre-Columbian tradition and iconography, and tropical flora and fauna of the Andean region.[7] In the Jesuit missions among Paraguay's Guarani Indians, a somewhat more subdued and delicate style of floral embossing evolved, a *mestizo* style sometimes referred to as Jesuit mission baroque.

Throughout the Andes, Indian and *mestizo* woodworkers, stone masons, weavers, and metalsmiths incorporated symbols and elements important in pre-Hispanic mythology into their work – monkeys, sirens, pumas, and vizcacha (a rabbit-like rodent), as well as the sun, moon, and stars. *Mestizo* baroque, in which the entire surface of an object or an architectural detail was intricately worked and completely filled, appealed to both sophisticated

1. *Tupu with Fish dangle*, 19th c.
cast and engraved silver

2. *Tumi*, cutting tool, transition period

3. *Silver Cross with "Taita Dios"*
silver

4. *Llama Head Tupus*, (tumbaga)
copper-gold alloy

5. *Heart shaped Tupu*
silver with colored stones

6. *Heart shaped Tupus*, shawl pin
silver with colored stones

7. *Rosario necklace with dijes and cross*
silver and stones

8. *Tupus*, Altoperu, 18th-19th c.
silver

Photographs by Anthony Richardson

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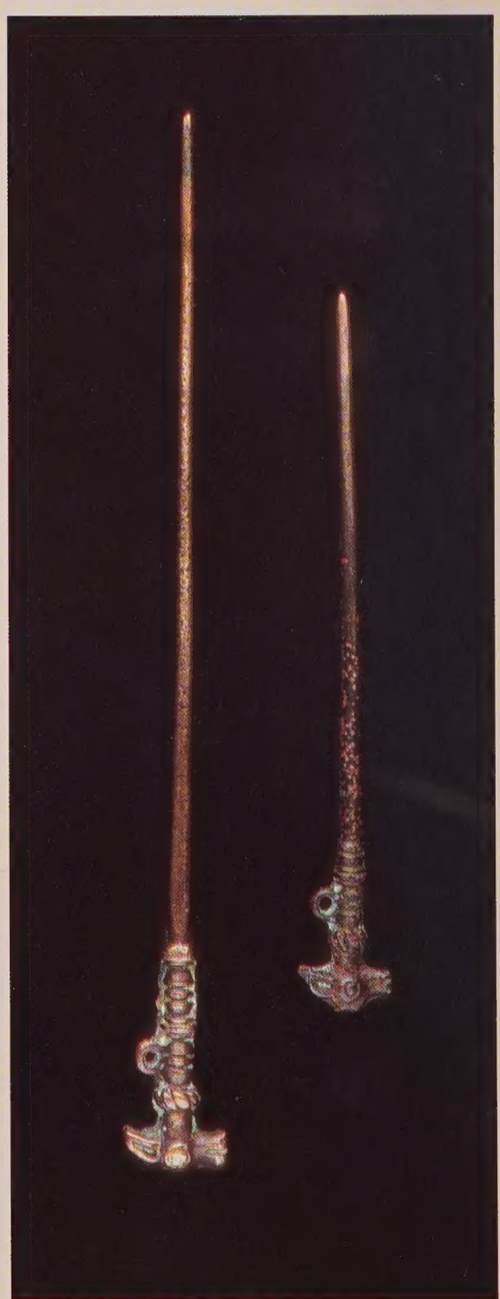

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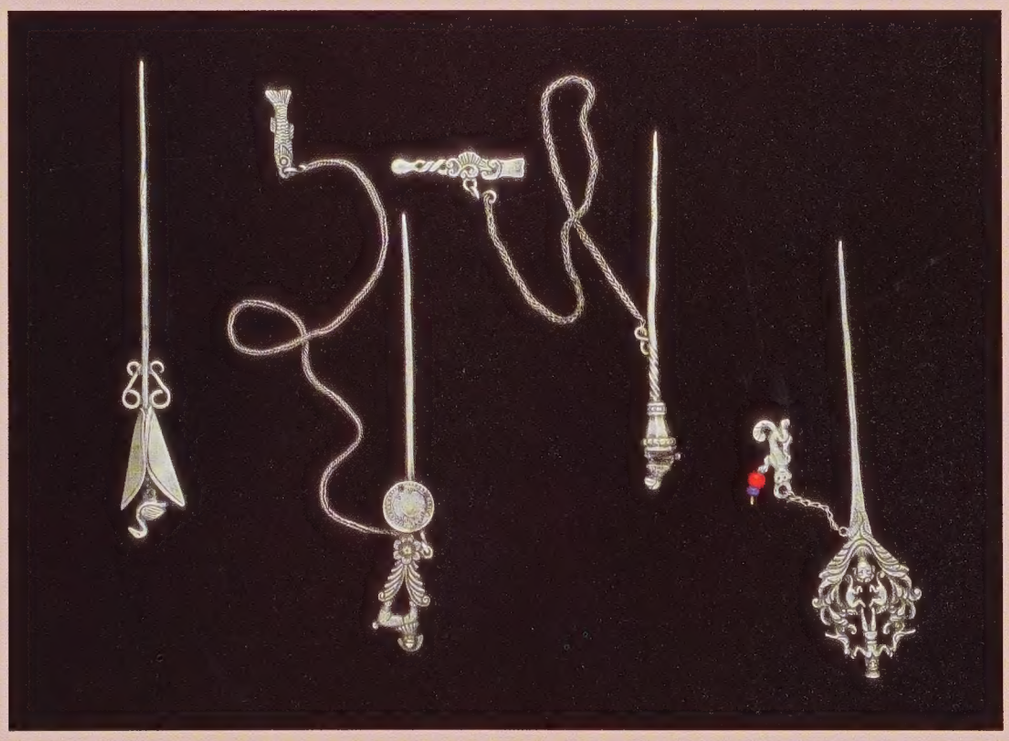

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Europeans and the unlettered indigenous masses. It was exuberant and elaborate, mysterious and complex, lavish and weighty. Although some clerics complained bitterly about the artisans' use of idolatrous pagan elements, many Europeans were oblivious to the special meaning that innocuous-seeming design details might hold for Andean Indians. The bell-shaped kantuta flower, for example, which appears everywhere in colonial-period crafts, symbolizes submission and has a special place in ancient Peruvian funeral customs, according to Alain Gheerbrant.[8] The Virgin, saints, angels, and the crucified Christ, whom Indians persist in calling *Taita Diós* (Father God) were often depicted wearing the *mascapaicha,* a feathered headdress denoting Incan royalty.

Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the *mestizo* baroque remained popular. Metalsmiths created objects of elaborate repoussé and chiseled silver decorated altars, caskets, wall plaques, and so forth. At the same time, however, they often worked in a nearly antithetical style, creating weighty, elegant, simple, raised objects with smooth, unadorned surfaces that recalled pre-Conquest artisan creations. In architecture, Incan buildings were constructed of massive blocks of perfectly cut and joined stone that needed no embellishment. In weaving, textiles were often exquisitely simple, with a thin band of brilliant color to one side of a field of undyed, tightly spun, silky vicuña or alpaca wool. Carved and polished wooden objects derived their beauty from the strength of the raw material and a simple form, rather than chiseled details.

In colonial-period silver reflective of the elegant, restrained aesthetic, a diametric opposite of the frenzied *horror vacui* of the *mestizo* baroque, the beauty of an object relied upon the elegant simplicity of its form, and the exquisite craftsmanship with which it was wrought, rather than on the embellishment of the object. Chalices, censers, cups, bowls, plates, platters, tureens, and other objects were patiently raised and skillfully formed. The addition of a finely worked detail, a simple beaded border, a cast finial or handle, a rocker-engraved design, supplied the right measure of adornment to complete a piece. The sheen of such an object's surface, faintly stippled by hammer marks, reflects the pre-Hispanic predilection for broad, shiny, reflective surfaces (the previously mentioned sheet-metal aesthetic).

A third style that courses through Andean silversmithing during the colonial era is filigree, a technique often employed by Jewish and Arab jewelers in Portugal and Spain in the fifteenth century, although filigree objects were crafted throughout the Mediterranean as early as classical Greece and the Etruscan period. In South America, the pre-Conquest artisans of the Quimbaya, Sinú, and Muisca cultures of the northern Andes produced surface-decorated, cast-filigree objects in gold and *tumbaga,* but true filigree work, using draw-plated gold or sliver wire to create an openwork design, appears to have arrived with the Iberians. In colonial Peru, gold and sliver filigree was employed in jewelry making and to craft crowns and attributes for saint figures. In the late colonial era, some large pieces, primarily animal-form incense burners, were created in silver filigree. This work is associated with the Ayacucho region, and the Lanao family in particular.

Without a doubt, the most impressive examples of Viceregal Peruvian artistry in silver are to be found in the region's churches, convents, and chapels, where the surfaces of altars, altar retables, and tabernacles have been completely worked in the intricate, gleaming high relief that typifies the *mestizo* baroque style. These astonishing displays of floral and vegetal tracery, putti (often with Indian faces), animals, birds, people, and sacred scenes were meant to captivate and awe the beholder, whether a sophisticated Spanish noble or a barefoot Indian peasant.

Ecclesiastical silver of the colonial period was both decorative and functional, and in the case of altars, pulpits, baptismal fonts, baldachins, and processional pallets, sometimes architectural as well. Many objects were typical of items found in any European church: missal stands, candelabras, holy water fonts, pyxis, crucifixes, censers, ciboria, sanctuary lamps, sconces, reliquaries and monstrances (sometimes encrusted with huge jewels), cruets, and chalices.

Other ecclesiastical silver forms were either unique to or typical of the Andean region. In rural churches, chalices, like the ancient Andean Indian *k'ero* and *cochas* (beakers and two-handled bowls used for ceremonial drinking) were sometimes decorated with tassels of silver chain, coins, and beads. In highland Bolivia, *mayas,* usually triangular or oval plaques with elaborate repoussé floral motives, were placed behind vases of flowers. *Navetas* (incense vessels in shapes reminiscent of Spanish ships (*naves*) were companion pieces to *incensarios* (censers). *Sahumadores* (perfumers) were used in some churches, their liturgical rather than domestic purpose indicated by a small cross on the top of the vessel. Saint figures (*santos*), large or small, were sometimes cast completely or partially in silver. In colonial Ecuador, a polychrome mask of silver or lead was sometimes used as the face for a carved wooden saint figure. Polychrome wood *santos* were often adorned with silver crowns, miters, aureoles, radiants and *potencias* (rays) as well as silver attributes: a plate of eyes for Santa Lucia, a silver fish for San Rafael, silver wings for archangels, silver equestrian gear for Santiago's (St. James') steed, a pair of silver or gold sandals for the Niño Jesús, and so forth. Portable altars (*retablos*) were popular with travelers and itinerant clergy. While most of these triptychs were made of wood and gesso, some were exquisitely crafted in silver.

Milagros, (Bolivia), 19th c.
cast and engraved silver
Martha J. Egan Archives
Photograph by Anthony Richardson

Throughout the Iberian world, including the South American colonies, the devout would decorate statues of the Virgin and the saints and their altars with small cast or sheet silver and gold votive offerings called *milagros* or *ex-votos.* These miniature animals, human figures, body parts, plants, and other objects were given to an image in thanks for an answered prayer, or in fulfillment of a vow (*promesa*). The faithful also adorned their favorite *santos* with gifts of jewelry, some of it very valuable and jewel-encrusted. Gold and silver earrings, necklaces *(gargantillas),* crosses, rosaries, and *rosario* necklaces were not only hung on the sacred image, but, in the Andes, jewelry and gold and silver decorations were also sometimes sewn onto the canvas painting of a beloved or miraculous image. The revered Virgin of Guadalupe of Chuquisaca (Sucre, Bolivia), painted by Fray Diego de Ocaña circa 1600, is festooned with gold and silver jewelry to the extent that only the hand and black face of the Virgin and her child are visible in a glittering sea of appliquéd silver and gold objects and pearls. The Virgin de Guápulo (Ecuador) is another image that has been thus decorated.

Religious jewelry was popular in the colonial period, an age of state-sponsored religion, public piety, and religiosity. Moreover, the wearing of precious metals and jewels in the form of religious adornment was a way for Spanish subjects to display their riches while not running afoul of the Sumptuary Laws that forbade ostentatious displays of wealth. In the Andes, one of the most unique forms of religious jewelry was the *relicario,* a devotional miniature painting or sculpture in a two-sided locket that was often of elegantly worked gold or silver. In the Americas, *relicarios,* which derived from the late medieval fashion of wearing saints' relics in lockets, rarely contained actual relics of the saints. Instead, the term "relic" referred to objects of sacred memory contained within the pendant casing. Crosses, those that were of gold and jewel-encrusted as well as those of simple silver, brass, or bronze, were worn by members of the clergy as well as lay men and women, especially those who were members of *cofradías* (religious confraternities).

San Antonio figure
silver filigree

ABOVE
Engraved Silver Censer, Altoperu, 18th c.
silver

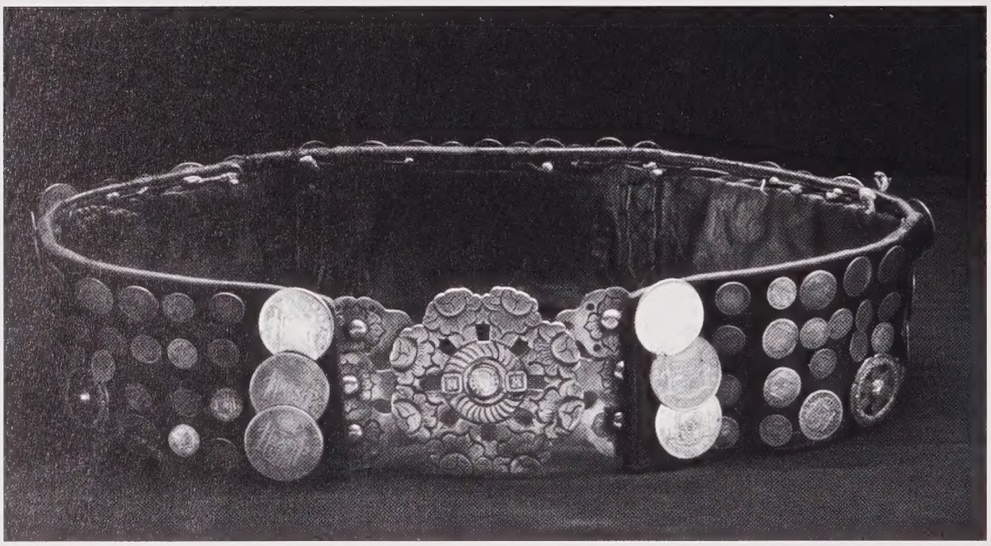
RIGHT, ABOVE
Cocha, late 18th c.
native style silver bowl with cast llama handles

RIGHT
Cupones, (chalice cups)
silver

Photographs by Anthony Richardson

San Franciscon in Quito, Ecuador, 18th c.
altar with silver and gold ornamentation
Photograph by Christopher Hirtz

Colonial silversmiths created a variety of domestic silver items similar to those used throughout Europe and her colonies: plates and platters, tableware, bowls, cups, tureens, candlesticks, tea and coffee pots, *chocolateras,* and so forth. The best of this silver is heavy, beautifully raised, and elegant. Colonial South American domestic silver is especially noted for certain forms unique to or specific to the period and the region. *Sahumadores* were perfumers in which incense or herbs were burned, the fragrant smoke serving to freshen clothing and rooms, and dispel disease, insects, odors, and harmful spirits. Like the Arabic perfumers popular on the Iberian Peninsula, South American *sahumadores* were often globular forms (squash, pomegranates, pineapples) atop a stem or they were in the shape of animals. Llamas, condors, doves, armadillos, deer, turkeys, and other native fauna were popular forms, especially in the late colonial period. *Pava-hornillos*, kettles containing coal chimneys that were used to boil water, were also crafted in the shape of animals and birds indigenous to the Andes. *Cocateras* were elaborate, footed boxes of hardwood and/or silver for the storing of coca leaves, used in every household for tea, chewing, and medicinal purposes. *Yerberas* served for the storage of yerba maté tea leaves and other herbs. Silver and gold maté cups on a footed base or pedestal were a popular household item in the southern Andes and Argentina, where to this day the drinking of maté tea is a daily ritual. Maté is most typically sipped through a *bombilla*, a specially crafted, fanciful metal straw or strainer with animal, floral or bird decoration. *Mistureros* were delicate baskets, usually of filigreed silver, that held the petals of fragrant flowers strewn to freshen clothing and linens and cast along the routes of religious processions. Paintings of the Virgin from the southern Andes sometimes depict her carrying a basket that appears to be a filigree *misturero.*



Rastra
coin studded belt
Martha J. Egan Archives
Photograph by Anthony Richardson

Jewelers crafted an infinite variety of personal items in gold and silver for the colonists: tobacco pouches *(tabaqueras),* strike-a-lights *(yesqueros),* ear spoons, hand-held spittoons, and so forth. On the pampas of Argentina, which was a part of the Viceroyalty of Peru until 1776, when it became a Viceroyalty of its own, gaucho cowboys and owners of the vast ranches (*estancias*) commissioned a variety of elaborate personal items in silver, gold, and gilded silver: wide, coin-studded belts with elaborate fastenings (*rastras*), daggers (*dagas*), knives (*facones*), and *chambaos* (cups of chiseled horn and silver). Throughout Spain's American colonies, equestrian silver was particularly elaborate and beautifully crafted; bridles, saddles, martingales, spurs, stirrups, harnesses, riding crops, and cups on a chain that could be lowered into a well or stream without the rider dismounting, and so forth.

In those areas where the indigenous culture maintained a strong presence: the rural highlands, and such urban centers as Cusco (the ancient Incan capital), Cuenca, Otavalo, Quito, Potosí, La Paz, Popayán, and Tucumán, Indian silversmiths continued to craft traditional items for natives and *mestizos.* Travelers carried *chifles* (oxen horns decorated with engraved bands of silver) that served for carrying liquids, especially *pisco* (brandy). Sometimes the *chifle* was completely crafted of silver in the shape of a horn. *Bastones de manda,* silver and chonta wood canes decorated with coins and personal talismans, were carried by village and clan headmen as badges of office. *K'eros* (beakers or tumblers), *akillas* (footed cups), and *cochas* (shallow, two-handled silver bowls, sometimes with a bull, condor, or llama in the center) were ceremonial drinking vessels based on pre-Hispanic forms. Silversmiths also produced a variety of traditional silver jewelry items. *Tupus,* pins used since ancient times by Andean women to fasten their shawls, were created in a variety of fanciful forms and designs. Cast miniatures were made for use as *milagros* or as *dijes* (charms) for women's *rosario* necklaces of trade beads, coins, and crosses, men's coca bags (*bastones de manda*), and other uses. In Chile, native silversmiths crafted traditional Araucanian silver jewelry up to modern times: headbands, collars, breastplates, large earrings, *tupus*, and other items of silver sheet, silver studs, and coins.

In sum, during Spain's three centuries of reign in the Andes, thousands of skilled metalsmiths worked the abundant silver and gold into a host of objects. Yet few examples of Viceregal Peruvian silver have survived into present times. The ages-old Spanish practice of melting down works of silver and gold to use as bullion in times of need or simply in order to craft something more fashionable is a primary reason for the disappearance of a significant part of the inventory of Spanish colonial silver and gold. The custom was hardly one invented by South American oligarchs when they fell on hard times. In 1475 Queen Isabel herself requested the churches of Castille to *loan* her half their plate, which was melted down to fund the War of Succession.[9] Unfortunately, the practice continues into modern times. In 1979-1980, the Hunt brothers' unsuccessful attempt to manipulate the world silver market resulted in the destruction of unknown quantities of Spanish colonial silver and irreplaceable worked silver objects the world over.

Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century silver from all parts of the Americas, works that were usually simple and sometimes not very well crafted, is especially rare. However, scholars have recently discovered a few examples of Peruvian silver from this era in southwest Spain. Centuries ago, grateful and proud *hidalgos* sent these works home from the Americas as gifts to their home parishes, where they remain today.

Other factors contributed to the disappearance of colonial silver. In coastal areas, pirates frequently sacked churches, treasuries, and homes and carried off all valuable objects. Many ships in Spain's treasure fleet, which sailed annually for the mother country from Cartagena, Colombia, with hoards of Peruvian silver and gold, some of it disguised as anchors or hidden in tar barrels to avoid taxes, never made it to their destination and were sunk at sea by pirates or violent storms. The natural disasters that plague South America – volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, mudslides, floods, and fires – further reduced the colonial silver and gold inventory, as did civil unrest and especially the wars for independence from Spain that began in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. More objects were destroyed in the post-Independence era, when nearly constant warfare and civil strife plagued many parts of the Andes. Mobs, soldiers, thieves, and some clerics themselves sacked churches, convents, and the homes of the wealthy and made off with their valuables. Governments hostile to the church frequently confiscated church treasuries and the works were never seen again.

Poor conservation methods and ignorance have also taken a toll. The burial of silver, a method frequently resorted to by besieged households, often led to severe damage or destruction of the objects. Moreover, the crude cleaning methods commonly used in Latin America to polish tarnished silver: lime juice, sand, salt, *blanco de España* (lead carbonate), and scouring pads, resulted in the erasure of detail and the scratching of delicate surfaces.

Little would remain today of the fine works created during the period of Spanish rule in South America were it not for the heirloom holdings of some families, the collections of a few dedicated, visionary collectors, and a small number of museums in South America, Europe, and the United States. Viceregal Peruvian silver collections are held in such US museums as: The Arizona Historical Society, Tucson; The Brooklyn Museum, The Denver Art Museum, The DeYoung Museum, San Francisco; The LA County Natural History Museum, The Mint Museum, Charlotte, NC; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe; The New Orleans Museum of Art, and The San Antonio Museum of Art, among others.

Increasing interest in historical silver from South America, as well as the continued abundance of the metal and its current low price, has led to a revival of colonial style silversmithing. Workshops in Lima, Arequipa, Cochabamba, and Buenos Aires in particular are producing remarkable reproductions of classic Peruvian silver, especially repoussé frames, candlesticks, *sahumadores,* cups, crosses, and *relicarios.* Unfortunately, many of these works are being artificially aged and sold as authentic colonial silver. Because the craftsmanship is often exceptionally fine, and silversmiths sometimes use historical methods to produce the works, only scientific analysis can determine the true age of a piece described as Spanish colonial silver. *Caveat emptor.*

Martha Egan is a specialist in Latin American colonial art. She resides in Corrales, New Mexico.

NOTES

1 Alain Gheerbrant, ed. *The Incas: The Royal Commentaries of Garcilaso, the Inca* (New York: Orion Press, 1963), 80.

2 Ibid, 151.

3 Samuel K . Lothrop, *Metals from the Cenote of Sacrifice, Chichén Itzá, Yucatan* (Cambridge: Peabody Museum Memoirs, Vol. X, No. 2, 1952), 9.

4 Gheerbrant, *The Incas,* 153.

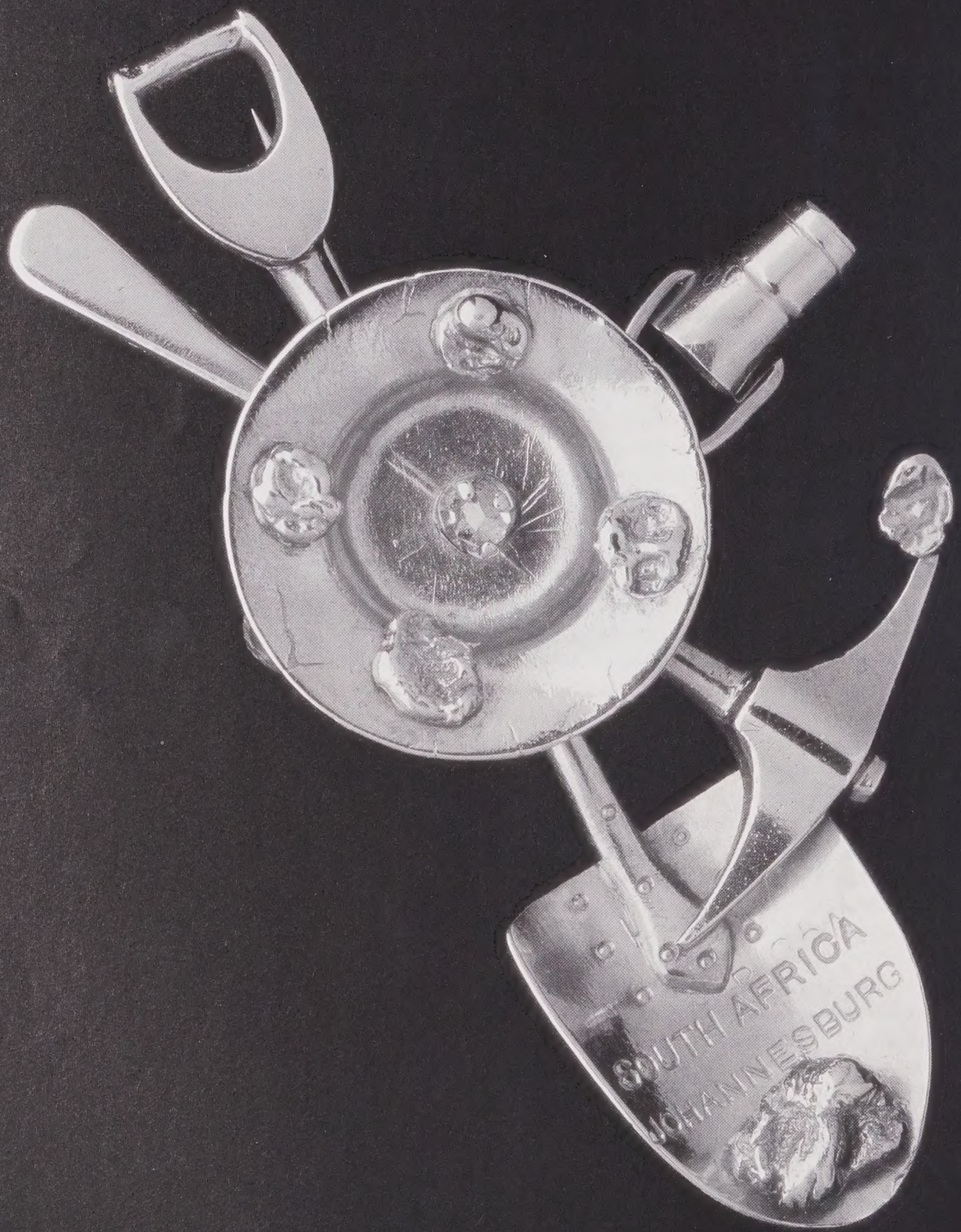
5 A. Taullard, *Plateria sudamericana* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Peuser, 1947) 30.

6 Winterthur Conference Report, *Spanish, French and English Traditions in the Colonial Silver of North America* (Winterthur: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, 1968) 11.

7 Teresa Gisbert, *Iconografia y mitos indigenas en el arte* (La Paz: Editoria Gisbert y Cía, S. A., 1980) 62-63.

8 Gheerbrant, *The Incas,* 395.

9 Peggy K. Liss, *Isabel the Queen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 119.


SOUTH AFRICA
JOHANNESBURG

Goldmines, Goldrushes and Nugget Jewels

Text: Yvonne Markowitz and Janis Staggs

"...GOLD – EVERYWHERE THE GLINT OF GOLD." THESE WERE THE WORDS RECORDED BY HOWARD CARTER TO DESCRIBE HIS INITIAL GLIMPSE OF THE TREASURE OF THE YOUNG EQYPTIAN KING, TUTANKHAMEN, WHOSE TOMB HE DISCOVERED ALONG WITH LORD CARNAVON IN 1992. THIS EXTRAORDINARY FIND, OF UNPRECEDENTED SCIENTIFIC AND HISTORIC IMPORTANCE, WAS REDUCED BY THE FAMED ARCHAEOLOGIST TO "GOLD," THE MOST DAZZLING, DURABLE, AND MEANINGFUL OF NATURE'S ELEMENTS.

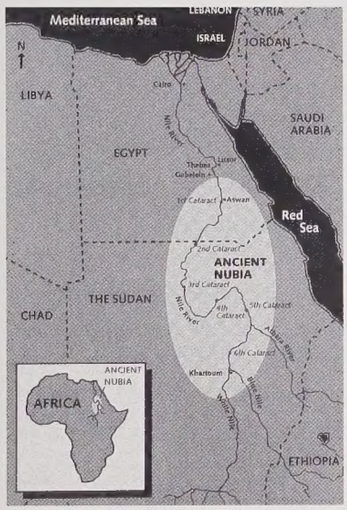


FIGURE 1
Map of ancient Egypt and Nubia
Graphic by Peter der Manuelian

FIGURE 7, LEFT
Mining brooch, c. 1890
gold with nuggets and diamond
3.4 cm. H. x 6 cm. W.
Johannesburg, South Africa
Private Collection

Carter's response to the three thousand year old entombed treasure, however, demonstrates the timeless allure of this metal. Its significance, originally linked to gold's inherent properties of sun-like brilliance, resistance to corrosion, and malleability, was enhanced no doubt by its rarity. For the ancient Egyptians, it also had profound implications into the afterlife. Upon completion of the embalming process the deceased was ideally encased in gold. Masks, caps for vulnerable fingers and toes, and occasionally entire coffins were crafted from gold sheet. Considered "the flesh of the gods," this immutable metal was viewed as a means of attaining immortality.

The ability to export gold was one reason for Egypt's ascendancy in the ancient world, enabling its rulers to obtain raw materials such as copper, tin, and silver from the East. It was also a source of wealth for Nubia, Egypt's rival and neighbor to the south (Fig. 1). Known also as Kush, this gold-rich region, whose boundaries extended southward from Aswan to Khartoum, was known in antiquity for its alluvial deposits and numerous auriferous tracts which stretched eastward across the desert to the Red Sea. Nubian burials were also accompanied by finely crafted objects of gold and both archaeological and written records document the mining and exportation of this most precious material.

It was in Nubia, in fact, that gold nuggets were first adapted and used as ornaments. The earliest known jewel of this type belonged to an ancestor of Piye, the first Kushite king (Fig. 2). This mid-ninth century B.C.E. ancestor or chieftain was buried in a pit grave under a circular gravel mound at el Kurru, an early Kushite cemetery not far from the Nile's Fourth Cataract. Although the grave was partially plundered in antiquity, several items of jewelry were found *in situ* around the head, chest, and left hand. They include a gold lunate earring, a plain gold finger ring, and two necklaces. The nugget, pierced for suspension and inscribed with a dedication to the god Amun, belongs to one of the latter.[1] It measures 30 mm. h. x 17 mm. w. A suspension boring was artfully situated by the ancient craftsman in an elongated outgrowth that simulates a bail. The surface was planed to provide a flat surface for the inscription which reads, "The Lord (god) Amun, may he give the perfect life." This dedication establishes a relationship between an earthly material (gold) and the divine or magical. Its inclusion in a royal burial also marks the nugget as a prestige or status item. In fact, two of the thirteen nugget pendants from Napatan tombs at nearby Nuri and Meroe[2] come from royal burials. These later nuggets, smaller and uninscribed, were found amongst the plundered remains of two queens buried nearly a century apart. In the case of Queen Madiken, buried at Nuri around 500 B.C.E., the 12 mm. long nugget was found on a gold wire necklet. Other items on this wire include two granulated ring beads and a rough triangular pendant of amazonite also known as microcline or green feldspar.

Another nugget (Fig. 3), the largest so far recovered from ancient Nubia,[3] comes from an intact male burial in the western cemetery at Meroe. It was found around the neck of the deceased, the leather or flax stringing material long disintegrated. Soldered to this 50 gram specimen is a hand-fabricated gold bail whose internal edges show signs of wear, a clear indication that this bold and substantial jewel was worn in life as well as death. Electron microprobe analysis by Richard Newman (Department of Objects Conservation and Scientific Research, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) determined that the nugget was about 91.2% gold, 8.8% silver and 0.08% copper. Very similar findings were obtained for the bail while the solder was found to contain about 78% gold, 12% silver, and 10% copper.

Adjacent to the nugget pendant from Meroe West 859 was an unworked lump of amazonite which was bored for suspension. This material, durable and no doubt highly valued for its color,[4] also had divine and royal connections. An earlier specimen inscribed for King Taharka (690-664 B.C.) in the Brooklyn Museum uses to advantage the edge of the crystal for the funerary text (Fig. 4). As with the first nugget jewel, this caged royal pendant reinforces the connection between an indigenous natural form with position, power, and religion.

FIGURE 2
Line drawing of Kurru nugget.
Inscribed gold nugget jewel of an early Napatan ruler buried at el Kurru,
9th century B.C.E.
3.0 cm. H. x 1.7 cm. W.
Sudan National Museum
Drawing by Yvonne Markowitz

For the ancestors and rulers of the Kushite Dynasty in Nubia, gold not only captured the very essence of the gods and endowed its owners with magical capabilities, it permeated the landscape and was a source of national wealth. To a certain extent this indestructible metal defined both the land and the people. And the jewel, which so dramatically expressed this relationship, was the placer nugget pendant.

Of course, Nubia was not the only land in the ancient Near East rich in alluvial gold deposits. The fifth century B.C.E. Greek historian, Herodotus, wrote of an extraordinary source in the Pactolus Valley (modern Turkey). A nugget (Fig. 5), now in the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in Ankara and dated to second half of the sixth century B.C.E., is believed to originate from this ancient mining site. It is pierced and fitted with a gold wire suspension hoop. The Lydians, credited with developing the gold refining process as well as the first system of coinage, no doubt saw in the nugget a symbol of their newly defined status in the world.

The classical world obtained its gold from a variety of sources which included Thrace, Macedonia, and the Balkan Peninsula for the Greeks and the Pennine Alps, Noricum, Britain, and Spain for the Romans. It is not surprising that there are no known nugget jewels from this period as neither civilization sought definition or identity through gold. The Romans, in fact, were known for their penchant for exploiting the world's resources.

While known goldfields were reworked over the next millennium, there was an increased tendency toward recycling. By the Middle Ages, it was standard practice for the customer to supply the goldsmith with gold and stones garnered from older items.[5] Supply could not keep pace with demand, however, and the tale of El Dorado circulated, giving rise to a whole breed of explorers who, filled with dreams and ambitions, sought to discover a land of infinite wealth.

El dorado is Spanish for "the gilded one" and one version of the legend purports that it was the name given to an Inca chief of Mañoa, a city on Lake Parima in Venezuela.[6] This mighty and fearless ruler would reportedly plaster his body with gold dust on an annual basis followed by a ritual bath in the lake to wash off the gold. In 1534, Don Pedro de Heredia searched Colombia for the fabled kingdom. Although he failed to locate El Dorado, he, like conquistadors before and after, did indeed find an abundance of gold.

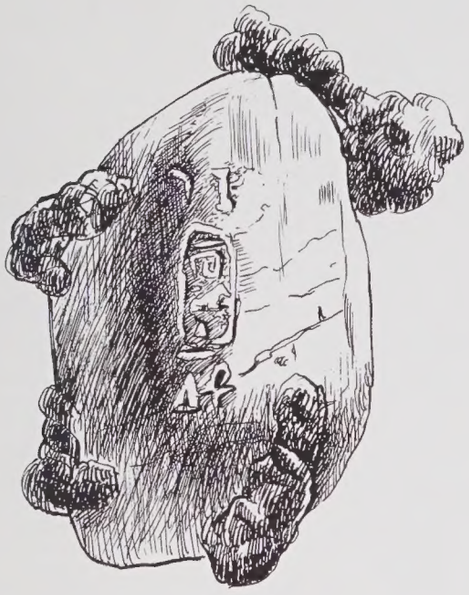


FIGURE 4
Ink drawing of Taharka pendant,
ca. 690-664 B.C.
Amazonite (microcline)
pendant inscribed for King Taharka
Brooklyn Museum
Drawing by Loretta Minervini

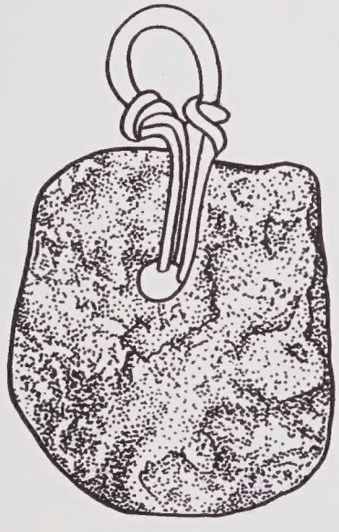


FIGURE 5
Ink drawing of nugget pendant.
Pierced Lydian nugget with wire hoop
for suspension

Initially it was freely given or traded with the newcomers. Gold would subsequently be seized from the natives and their temples and graves looted. Later, as the sources were discovered, placer and vein mining would be established employing natives and Africans to work as slaves in the mines.

It is telling of the connection between the church and state that the first gold to reach Spain from Hispaniola (modern Haiti) in 1495 was given by King Ferdinand V to Pope Alexander VI in Rome and was hence used to gild a cathedral dome.[7] It has been estimated that from 1500–1650, approximately 180 to 200 tons of gold were seized from the American "kingdoms of gold."[8] It is a sad commentary that Europeans returned to the furnace the hand-wrought treasures they so greedily plundered.[9] Archaeological remains from the Americas, however, attest to the sophistication and skill of native metalworkers whose efforts were so recklessly discarded. Like the Egyptians, "the Andeans associated gold with the life-giving sun, the deity that brought warmth and fertility to the soil and to humans."[10] Pre-Columbian cultures do not appear to have appreciated the noble metal in its native state. Rather, finely worked objects for bodily adornment were highly valued. The Spanish, however, specially prized large nuggets. It is recorded that a nugget weighing 600 ounces was lost in a shipwreck on its way to Spain from Hispaniola in 1502.[11] A nugget more than twice as large, weighing 1,503 ounces, was recovered in Peru and "forwarded to Spain for presentation to Charles V (1517–1558)."[12]

Spurred on by the magnificent finds in the Caribbean and later, Central and South America, the Spanish conquistadors extended their search northward. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century, Spain had tangible proof of gold in North America. Sea captain Alonzo Piñeda reported in 1519 that the inhabitants of North America wore gold jewelry and that gold nuggets were to be found in the rivers.[13] In 1528, Pánfilo de Narváez, Spanish governor of Florida, questioned Indians living near Tampa Bay as to the source of their gold. They claimed that it was from a region in the north called Apalachen (sic).[14] Hernando de Soto received further proof of the existence of gold during an expedition to the southern Appalachian mountains in 1540, when a young native described the methods by which the locals "mined, melted, and refined" gold.[15] The explorers were impressed by his knowledge commenting that the young man had either seen the process or "...else the Devil had taught him how..."[16] Although the full extent of the discoveries made by the conquistadors in North America is unknown, there is limited evidence which suggests that the Spanish actually mined in the Southern Appalachians.[17]

In 1799, Conrad Reed, son of a farmer in western North Carolina, made a chance discovery that gave birth to a new generation of prospectors and led to the identification of a southern gold belt. Reed returned home from a fishing trip on Meadow Creek with a seventeen pound glittering stone that was relegated to the role of doorstop. It must have come as a surprise when three years later the stone was properly identified as gold ore! Farmers in the area began searching their property for gold as word of the find spread.[18] The southern gold rush began in earnest when Mathias Barringer, a farmer and part-time prospector, made a discovery in 1825 while digging along Long Creek. His serendipitous find later led to the identification of an important gold-bearing quartz vein which ran from Virginia through Georgia.[19]

By the early 1840s, the easy placer mining was exhausted in the south and such work was no longer profitable. However a new El Dorado was soon to be discovered out west. James Marshall, the partner of John A. Sutter in a sawmill scheme, found pieces of gold in a fork of the American River in January of 1848.[20] Marshall, once he had ascertained that it was gold, immediately reported the find to Sutter and they plotted to keep the discovery a secret to protect their business. Nonetheless, as more gold was discovered, word of the finds spread.

FIGURE 3
MFA nugget pendant, ca. 700 B.C.E.
Gold nugget with bail, from Meroe W 671
3.2 cm. H. x 2.3 cm. W. x 1.3 cm. D.
Harvard – MFA Expedition,
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston 23.311

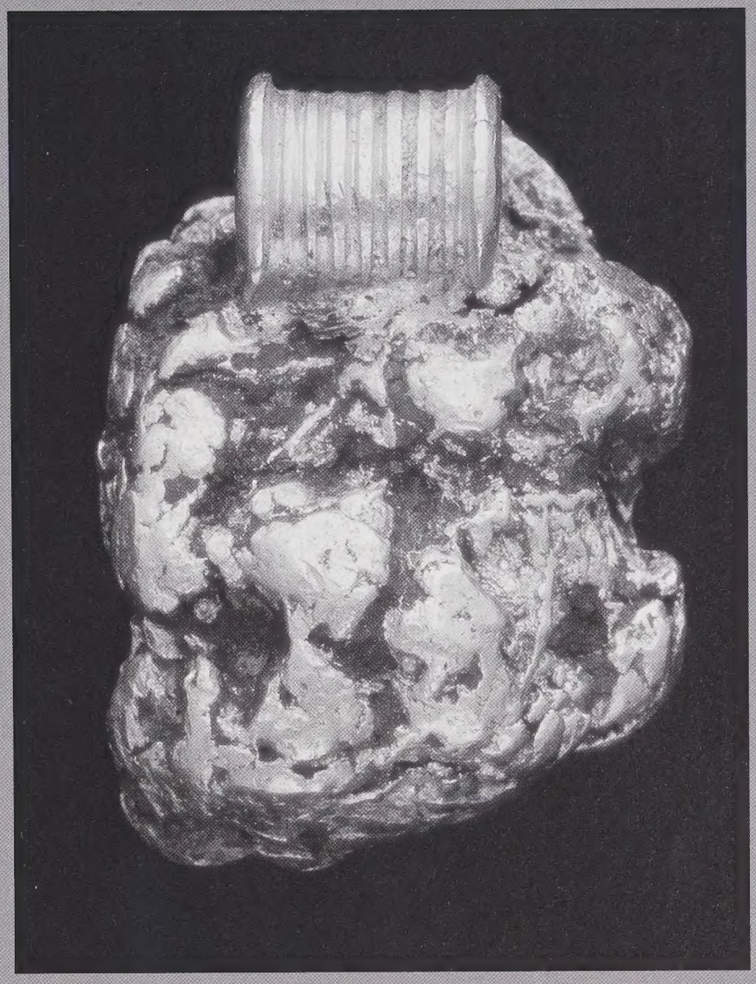
In his annual address given to Congress, President James K. Polk proudly announced that hidden treasure lay buried in the booty of the Mexican war.[21] Polk's address gave a sense of validity to the claims which had been previously dismissed in other parts of the country. Once what many had seen as wild rumors were validated by the President, who noted that the wealth of California was known at the time of acquisition, thousands rushed west. His speech launched a stampede and had a dramatic impact on the territory. Towns sprang up overnight and San Francisco was transformed from a sleepy bay to a west coast metropolis. Spurred on by the news of gold in "abundance", many southern prospectors as well as pioneers from the North East, Europe, Mexico, and China undertook the long and perilous journey to California. Pamphlets dating to 1849 and 1850 were circulated in French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Russian, and Polish, each discussing the route to California and the methods of gold mining.[22] All males who had reached California by December 31, 1849 were eligible to join as founding members of the Society of California Pioneers. Although some of the early pioneers did find their fortune, for most it was arduous and unprofitable work. Inflation was high and many who became wealthy during the gold rushes were entrepreneurs who provided goods or services to the miners and their families.

Many silversmiths and jewelers were attracted to California and moved West along with would-be prospectors. California was, despite her wealth of raw materials, a frontier land lacking both the facilities and expert craftsmen needed to execute ambitious and sophisticated commissions.[23] A medallion in the collections of the M.H. de Young Memorial Museum illustrates the capabilities of local metalsmiths in the early days of the gold rush. This commemorative item, one of several pendants made in celebration of California statehood (1850), was presented to members of the San Francisco Board of Aldermen. Hand-fabricated from two gold plates joined by rivets, the front is appropriately decorated with thirty-one stars while the word "Eureka" encircles a large central nugget set within a star. A circle of smaller nuggets borders the outer edge. The inscription on the reverse indicates that this particular medal was made for Colonel William Greene, President of the Board of Aldermen from 1850-51. Apparently there was a bit of controversy surrounding the medals as they were originally purchased at the cost of $150 each with funds from the public treasury. When the medals became "...object(s) of ridicule," the Aldermen were given the option to purchase them with their own money or return them so that the proceeds obtained from the melting pot could be returned to the treasury.[24]

FIGURE 6
Tri-colored gold ladies' watch enhancer,
ca. 1900
2.0 cm. H. x 4.2 cm. W.
probably Cripple Creek, Colorado
Private Collection

While there is evidence to support the claim that early metalsmiths engaged in limited craft production, it is apparent that they were basically occupied with repairs or works of simple design. It was not long, however, before jewelers and businessmen with aspirations of catering to the needs and whims of the newly rich were attracted to the west coast cities. The firm of Shreve and Company, established in 1852, was among the first in San Francisco which hoped to capitalize on the boon created from an expanding mining industry. However, they did not establish a workshop for the production of jewelry and silver until 1881. While the bulk of the company's early records was lost in the fires of 1885 and 1906, a catalogue from 1904 illustrates several examples of quartz jewelry, including popular mining designs such as the single shovel and the crossed pick and shovel with pan, recognized as the international emblem of miners and mining.[25]

Simple pieces of nugget jewelry were also made for miners, mine owners, and their families. Obviously the use of the nugget in its raw state would identify the wearer as having direct connections with the romantic business of mining. One interpretation of nugget jewelry is that it extends from the long tradition of wearing a trade emblem, such as a hat badge or a guild or signet ring, that visually signifies one's affiliation. Nuggets would certainly be recognized by all as the product of adventuresome miners. A common scenario would involve the miner bringing a small bag of specimens to the local jeweler. Occasionally they would agree upon exchanging the gold for a ready-made article. They could even discuss the creation of a custom piece of jewelry using the nuggets supplied by the miner.



Technically, nuggets can be easily joined and made into chains, bracelets and pendants by adding small soldered loops. Often the final product would take the form of a watch fob or stickpin, both utilitarian items. In fact, many watch fobs have since been converted into more marketable items such as necklaces. Sometimes, however, the miner would request that nuggets be fashioned into a piece of jewelry that would then be given to a family member or loved one. The Oakland County Museum holds in its collection a three-strand necklace which contains fifty gold nuggets. Fortunately the provenance for this piece is known – a share owner of the Argonaut Mining Company presented it to his daughter around 1900 – a valuable token of his pride and affection.

THE GOLD RUSH WHICH BEGAN IN CALIFORNIA WAS ONLY THE FIRST AMONG MANY THAT WOULD BEGIN IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD.

The gold rush which began in California was only the first among many that would begin in the second half of the 19th century in the U.S. and abroad. Ordinary folk who dreamed of striking it rich would have other opportunities to try their luck as gold was soon to be found in all of the western states. Jewelers followed the trail of prospectors, confidant that their skills would be put to use. A piece of mining jewelry, most likely from one of the western states, is a pin which also functions as a watch enhancer (Fig. 6). Elaborate and pictorial, this early 20th century pin appears to have been inspired from either a real-life landscape or a photograph. Depicted is a log cabin nestled within a mountainous landscape. The setting sun marks the end of a miner's arduous day while his tools, a pan and shovel, have been deposited outside. The panorama is heightened by the careful placement of colored gold leaf on the surface – the trees are tinted pale green and the sun is a subtle pink hue. The mark stamped on reverse, "Billo, 14K," has not yet been identified. However, the imagery bears an uncanny resemblance to the mining region of Colorado.

As with California, it was a river that first yielded bits of gold that sparked a bonanza in Australia. In 1823, surveyor James McBrian reported finding gold particles in the Fish River near Bathurst, New South Wales. For various reasons, the discovery was kept secret, the primary one being for the sake of law and order as Australia had been established as a penal colony. Additionally, McBrian presumed that with finds so small, mining ventures would prove unprofitable. It would be another thirty years before he was proven wrong. Later discoveries in the 1830s and 1840s were also suppressed by officials who feared the reactions of prisoners should the news become public. However, when the discovery of gold in California created an exodus for the Golden State, officials announced a discovery by Edward H. Hargraves. Hargraves, who had recently returned from an unsuccessful prospecting venture in the gold fields of California, recognized a similarity in landscape of New South Wales. When he panned gold from Summer Hill Creek in February of 1851 (coincidentally near Bathurst NSW which McBrian had deemed uneconomical), he bragged that he would open the "age of gold." Once his discovery was confirmed, he received a £500 reward and was appointed the Commissioner of Crown Lands.[26] The authorities soon released the welcome news of his discovery to the public and prospectors flooded into the area. It was only a matter of time before discoveries were made throughout the provinces of Australia. By 1855, mining jewelry in the form of brooches, pins, and chains were available for newly rich and enthusiastic travelers.[27]

While among the last of the gold rushes of the nineteenth century, the discovery of gold in the Transvaal region of South Africa began a new chapter in the epic tale of world gold. The story begins in October of 1853 when Pieter Marais found gold in the Crocodile River. As a veteran of both the California and Australia gold rushes, he was well versed in the foibles of gold mining. Confident that the earth would yield more of her golden treasure with greater investment, he journeyed to Potchefstroom, the Boer capital of the Transvaal, to seek support. On the basis of his report, an agreement was signed in December 1853 with the Boer authorities giving themselves the authority to carry out a death sentence should Marais "uncover a gold mine" and share this information with foreigners.[28] In 1854, he continued to prospect and did find more gold but apparently not in sufficient quantity to persuade his Boer patrons to continue to subsidize his speculation.

Small finds of gold were reported in subsequent years and there was a minor rush on the Blyde River in 1874. However, the big find would come in 1886 when George Walker discovered an auriferous rock on Langlaagte, the Oosthuizen family farm. Langlaagte was in the Witwatersrand (Ridge of White Waters) region of the Transvaal. This area, known as the Rand, lay atop a landlocked reef of rich ore-bearing rock. The Dutch settlers of South Africa, known as Boers, had lived in the Transvaal since 1835. After gaining control from the British in 1881, the Boers were none too pleased to have a largely British immigrant population occupying their territory while digging for riches. Paul Kruger, President of the Dutch South African Republic, planned carefully to maintain control of Boer land. He determined that a mining city should be established in an orderly fashion and subsequently the city of Johannesburg was founded in 1886. In the nearby digging fields, however, miners soon realized that the gold formation was quite different from that of California and Australia. The gold itself was concentrated in an enormous reef about 300 miles long. Their endeavors were known as the "millionaire's gold rush" due to the large amount of money needed to extract the precious metal.[29] Several large companies were formed by those who had already earned fortunes from the prolific diamond mines. Much of the investment for the gold mining came from the British and tensions increased between the Boer community and British nationals who now had a great economic interest in South Africa. The struggle for profits and power led to the Boer War.

One jewel from the mining fields is a brooch of the standard mining design (Fig. 7). The nugget-adorned crossed pick and shovel are featured with a central pan from with a small pail pendant. The surface of the shovel is decorated with a nugget as well as the words, "SOUTH AFRICA/Johannesburg." In addition, four nuggets are placed in the corners of the pan and a small diamond is centered in the basin – a testament to the joint bounty of the region. The pin dates to the late 19th century and is marked "18K" on the reverse.

THE LAST GREAT GOLD RUSH OF THE 19TH CENTURY WAS IN THE KLONDIKE REGION OF ALASKA AND CANADA.

The last great gold rush of the 19th century was in the Klondike region of Alaska and Canada. From the mid-19th century, pioneers had traveled north in search of gold and minor discoveries encouraged further searches. The real find eluded all until a chance discovery in 1896. Skookum Jim, an Indian prospecting with a group of men, stopped for a drink of water before returning to camp with a moose he had killed. Fortune smiled upon him for he found a number of nuggets in what was then called Rabbit River, later renamed Bonanza River. Jim reported his find to George W. Carmac, a white man in his party. Discrepancy arises as to who should be credited with the discovery for Carmac claimed that he had found the gold, although he also did stake claims for the two Indians in his group.[30] Once word spread that gold had been found in an appreciable size and quantity, another gold rush was born. Those already living in the area hurried to stake a claim and thousands began to pour into the northern territory.

Scagway, Alaska, situated on the Taya Inlet and strategically positioned at the confluence of the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails, came to be known as the gateway to the gold fields. It was a port of entry for many who came to try their luck in the Yukon and this area thrived as a gold rush town at the turn of the century. A fraternal order known as the Arctic Brotherhood was established in Scagway in 1899. They took as their symbol the miner's emblem of the crossed pick and shovel with a central mining pan and added the initials "AB". Lapel pins were made to be worn by members, an example of which is preserved in the collection of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. Small in size with a diameter of 1.5 cm, the gold pin is crafted in two parts. The top piece takes the shape of a gold pan which is marked "AB" and decorated with three small nuggets. The records of the Klondike National Park Service indicate that the nuggets were panned by the original owner of the pin, Ralph "RR" Mason.[31] By 1900 the Arctic Brotherhood had built their first meeting building in Scagway which stands today and is a popular tourist attraction. The Victorian rustic facade with a mosaic pattern of driftwood and sticks proudly incorporates their identifying emblem and reminds all visitors of the exciting history of the town.

FIGURE 8
Thomas R. McPhee
Belt buckle, 1980
silver with gold nuggets
Vancouver, British Columbia
Private Collection

CONCLUSION

Our knowledge of the meaning of nugget jewelry in the ancient world comes directly from ancient sources. For those intimately involved in gold production, there is an appreciation for the natural form that defies aesthetics. Meaning in this context derives from an identity with the land and natural forms. This applies to the 19th century miner outfitted with simple nugget chains or watches with nugget-encrusted surfaces. Vicarious meaning, however, could be obtained by those indirectly involved in the discovery and extraction of gold yet spurred by its association with fame, glamour, and wealth.

It is not a coincidence that a different type of jewel, the souvenir nugget item, achieves popularity at the height of the Industrial Revolution. It is, in effect, a by-product of a growing consumerism. Travel during this period, once the prerogative of the upper classes, was embarked upon with great enthusiasm by an increasing number of people. For those adventurous souls who rejected and spurned the Grand Tour and opted for the frontier lands of the American West, the Australian Outback, the Yukon, or South Africa, the appeal of jeweled souvenir items as a badge of their courage is obvious. The imagery in both instances was specific to the site, i.e. mosaics of Roman ruins for the Grand Tour, the tools of the gold worker for the adventurous tourist. In case the iconography left any doubt as to the source of the jewel, place names were sometimes included, such as the popular "ROMA" jewels and mining brooches with the town name on a banner.

The romantic image of the gold miner remains a part of our imagination. Nineteenth century mining jewelry is avidly collected and continues to be a source of inspiration for contemporary craftsmen. Such as the nugget encrusted sterling silver belt buckle designed by the Canadian sculptor Thomas R. McPhee (Fig. 8). The idea for the composition derives from a black and white photograph of the Klondike region by E.A. Hegg (1898) entitled, *The Exhausted Stampeder*. Surface decoration using small nuggets and cast nugget look-alike continue to be made and purchased in those areas once known for their mines.

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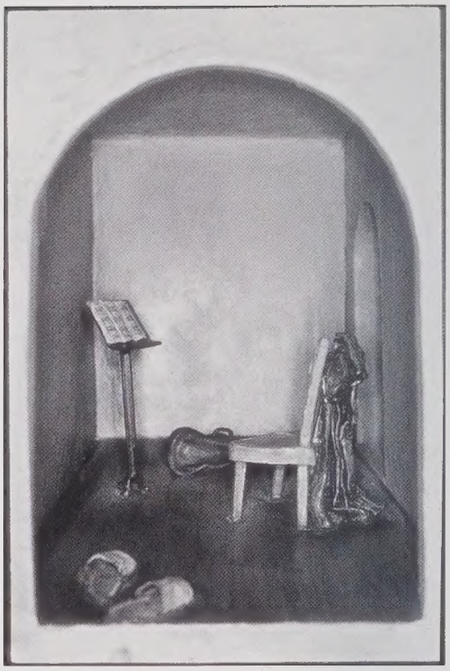
Janis L. Staggs is a graduate student in the Cooper-Hewitt Decorative Arts Program.

NOTES

1. This necklace, now at the Sudan National Museum in Khartoum, consists of sixteen biconical beads of gold sheet, the pierced nugget and a hollow gold Ptahtek amulet.
2. The ancient site of Meroe lies on the western bank of the Nile, midway between the 5th and 6th Cataract. It became the center of Nubian civilization between the 3rd century B.C.E. – 3rd century AD.
3. The nugget was excavated by George Reisner of the Harvard-Museum Expedition in 1923 from Meroe West 859 and dates to the mid- seventh to mid- sixth century B.C.E. It is now part of the Nubian Collection of The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (23.311).
4. In the Nile Valley, green stones were symbolic of growth, regeneration and rebirth. See R. Wilkenson, *Symbol and Magic in Egyptian Art,* London, Thames and Hudson, 1994, p. 108-9.
5. Ronald W. Lightbown, *Mediaeval European Jewellery.* London: Published by the Victoria and Albert Museum with the assistance of the Getty Grant Program, 1992, p. 34-5.
6. J. Malcolm Maclaren, D.Sc., *Gold: Its Geological Occurrence and Geographical Distribution.* London: The Mining Journal, 1908, p. 633.
7. Ibid., p. 615-616.
8. Brian M. Fagan, *Kingdoms of Gold, Kingdoms of Jade.* London: Thames and Hudson, 1991, p. 229.
9. Vincent Buranelli, *Gold: An Illustrated History.* Maplewood, NJ: Red Dembner Enterprises Corp., 1979, p. 204-205. Buranelli includes an excerpt from the 1847 text *The Conquest of Peru* by William H. Prescott. Prescott here relates the tale of King Atahualpa of Peru who offered gold and silver to Pizarro in order to save his life. Pizarro accepted the ransom which included many exquisite objects such as an ear of Indian corn "...in which the golden ear was sheathed in its broad leaves of silver, from which hung a rich tassel of threads of the same precious metal." However, in order to ensure a fair division of the treasure, the assembled objects were melted down "...to ingots of a uniform standard...." One final note, such generosity did not spare Atahualpa's life; he was executed in August of 1533.
10. Fagan, p. 176-177.
11. Maclaren, p. 616.
12. Maclaren, p. 632.
13. David Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush.* Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1993, p. 8.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. See Williams p. 9 for complete information.
18. Ibid., p. 11.
19. Ibid., p. 11-12.
20. *California: A Guide to the Golden State.* New York: Hastings House, 1943, p. 690. While the discovery of gold in California is traditionally credited to Marshall, the United States government knew of the existence of gold in the American River as early as 1841. In fact, in 1842, twenty ounces of gold dust were sent to the Philadelphia Mint from California.
21. As a result of the Mexican War, present day California and other western states were ceded to the United States in 1848 by agreement of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo for the purchase price of $15 million.
22. Joseph H. Jackson, Editor, *Gold Rush Album.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949, 22-23; p. 165.
23. Edgar W. Morse, editor, *Silver in the Golden State.* Oakland California: The Oakland Museum, History Department, 1986.
24. Information regarding the history of the Aldermen medallions was kindly furnished by Rob Krulak, Dept. of American Paintings, M.H. deYoung Memorial Museum.
25. Evans, p. 9.
26. Buranelli, p. 72.
27. For a discussion of "goldfields" jewelry from Australia, see A. Schofield and K. Fahy, *Australian Jewellery,* Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1991.
28. Buranelli, p. 89.
29. Buranelli, p. 96.
30. Buranelli, p. 110-112.
31. Our thanks to Karl Gurcke of the National Park Service who brought the pin to our attention and supplied the photograph and other pertinent material.



Amor Eterno, (detail),
1995-96
metal, wood,
prismacolors, paint
4½ x 3¼ x 4½"

De Colores: New Work by Anna Jaquez

Adair Margo Gallery
El Paso, Texas
May 30 – July 5

by Elizabeth Jones

Anna Jaquez began her first show at the Adair Margo Gallery with an auspicious, near sell-out bang. Her work appeals to a broad audience through her skillful combinations of multi-media craftsmanship, nostalgic content, and pleasing forms. Jaquez is a storyteller who creates *mise-en-scenes* which provoke the dramatic imaginations of her viewers. The exhibition consisted of 14 mixed-media boxes hanging on the wall or placed on pedestals.

The *Tirando Chancla Series,* 1995-96, includes seven narrow shrines. Each box contains a miniature room (5 x 5 x 5"), furnished with objects that reflect members of her family. The rooms and their trappings are constructed of prismacolored copper. So convincing is the illusion which Jaquez conveys that the viewer feels like Gulliver spying on the Lilliputians. The world that Jaquez creates, however, is not a foreign one, but a world that seems as familiar as worn out shoes. The series title *Tirando Chancla* means throwing away the old shoes, which is Chicano slang for throwing a party. The titles, more than the objects, remind us of Jaquez's Mexican-American heritage. They participate in the same kind of surreality that haunts the stories of Latin American writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The objects, however, transcend cultural boundaries in their simplicity. Magic realism heightens the ordinary, endowing things with spirit. Each room contains a pair of old shoes, such as high-heeled red pumps, worn work boots, bedroom slippers, or ballet toe shoes. A few significant objects, such as a rocking chair, potted plants, and a garden hose, a paint bucket and carpenter's tools, an ironing board with clothes, or a violin case and music stand, also inhabit the interiors.

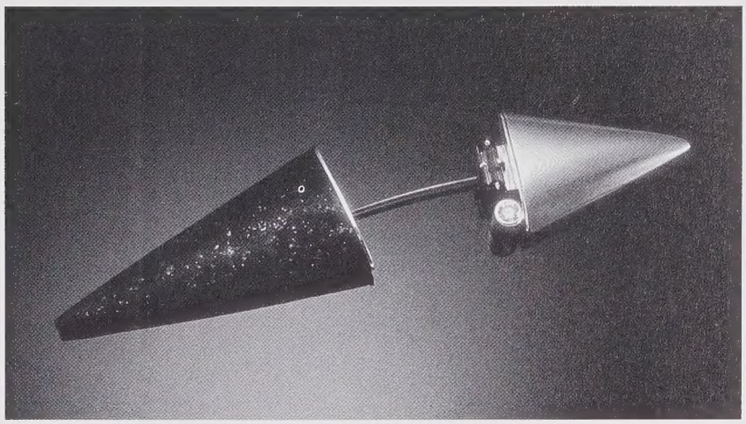
The rooms, too, have a strong presence in spite of their tiny size. Most open onto shadowed spaces introduced by a cracked door, a balcony, an alcove, staircase, or hallway. Sometimes, if we crane our necks, we can glimpse another room through the opening. These rooms are the rooms of our dreams. Jaquez uses rapidly receding perspectives which enhance our feelings of mysterious, infinitely connected spaces. The images of Giorgio de Chirico came to mind as I sensed the empty spaces of Jaquez's work. Empty, because no human figure is present, yet full, because the objects and architecture convey a strong anthropological presence which invades the emotional spaces of our dreams. The personification of inanimate objects is clearly intended by the artist who recalls that her family humorously referred to their lumpy old couch as *los comadres,* the old gossiping godmothers, a title she gives to one of her pieces.

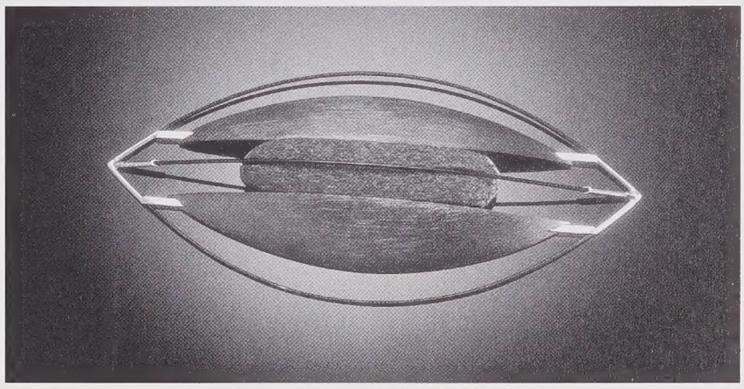
Several objects including *Wrong Door,* 1994, take the shape of stuccoed buildings. The artist's father is a builder who continually added on to their house. Boyfriends found difficulty locating the front door as the house erratically grew. Jaquez draws inspiration from the imaginative use of odd materials that her father combined in fantastic decorative motifs and spaces. Just as one might knock to gain entrance into a house, the viewer is invited to knock above the doorway so that the dark interior is lit. A distant courtyard is visible through the doorway of *Hacienda Gordofeo,* 1996. A knock reveals a staircased entry hall where evidence of the residents resides. The artist's interesting manipulation of space, light, and the viewer draws her audience into her world where each populate the scene with their own characters and concocts their own plots. For Jaquez, it is important to record the narratives of her life. Often, she writes her stories on the surfaces of her pieces although the writing is more decorative than conceptual. Jaquez's visualized stories maintain the same communicability that verbal language affords while opening the floodgates of memories and dreams which form our most hidden and personal being.

Elizabeth Jones is a professor of Art History at the University of Texas, El Paso.

RIGHT
Brooch, 1992
14k, sterling, damacus steel,
tourmaline, diamond
3¼ x 1 x ½"

BELOW
Brooch, 1995
14k, silver, steel, fossil whalebone
4 x 1¾ x ½"





C. James Meyer

Anderson Gallery
Virginia Commonwealth University
September 29 – October 20, 1995

by Paula Owen

Photographs by Taylor Dabney

My first encounter with the recent work of C. James Meyer was similar to many gallery experiences in which the *objets d'art* are isolated in the sterile environment of the *white cube.* Given that jewelry is difficult to show well in a conventional gallery setting because the volume of most gallery spaces overwhelms the intimacy of the work, the tasteful cases and lighting employed in this exhibition, allowed Mr. Meyer's neck pieces, rings, and brooches to come across fairly well. The formality of the setting and the formality of his pieces, in fact, at first seemed to work together, and I was lured by his minimalist's aesthetic. Several weeks later, however, I had the occasion to handle the work and to wear one of his brooches from this exhibition. My perspective changed dramatically.

Though in the gallery I had admired his restrained sense of design, choice of materials, and his compositional choices in mass, line, and texture, it was not until I had interacted with the brooches that I really came to fully understand his work and the richness of it. In wearing one of these exquisite brooches I became fully conscious of the artist's sensibilities, determinedly haptic as well as visual, and of other non-observable properties of the pieces themselves. They are extraordinarily satisfying to handle and to wear; though large, a brooch rested on the curve of my sternum like a tiny, weightless shield, and performed its closing and unclosing duties with the satisfying precision of true craftsmanship.

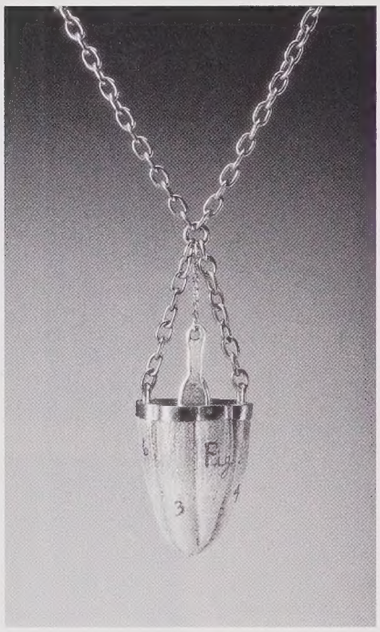
The pieces in this exhibition, constructed of precious and non-precious metals, steel wire, beach pebbles, and whalebone push the limits of the wearable, but remain highly wearable. His works also impart preciousness to non-precious materials by his careful treatment of found stones set into gold and by the framing of such unusual materials as whalebone. The brooches especially belong to the *strong, silent-type* of jewelry and possess a masculinity conveyed by the choice of materials, the nautical themes, and the subtle references to early weaponry such as harpoons and spear-points. Though there is strength embodied in these works, isolation and introspection are also conveyed because of the associations with small boats and large expanses of water. Contemplative as a poem composed at sea, Meyer's pieces speak about the maker even as they commune with the wearer.

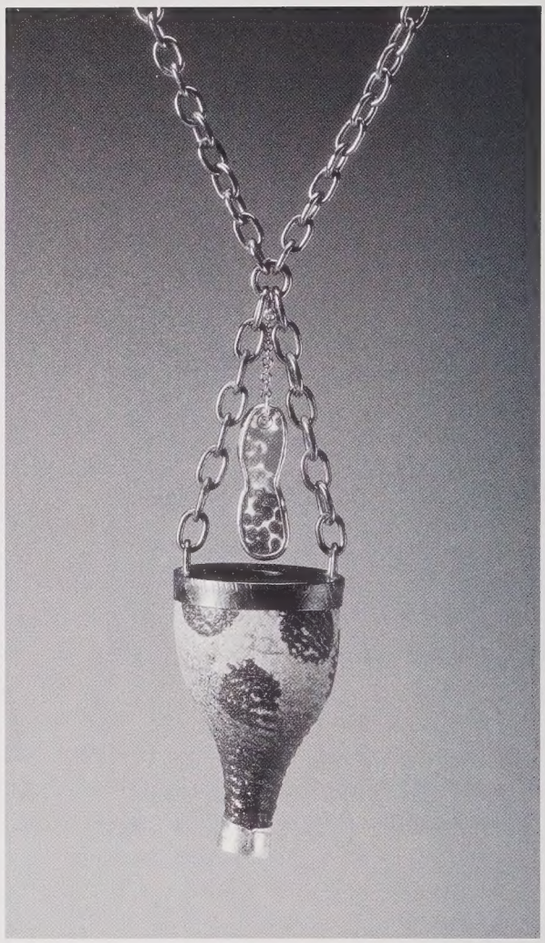
At the same time, this work is remarkable for the fusion of the elegant and crude, in attitude and texture, and for Meyer's reverence for the beautiful, the timeless, and the universal, which he manages to accomplish without imitation.

Paula Owen is the Director of the Hand Workshop in Richmond, Virginia.

RIGHT
Circadian Neckpiece #6, 1996
enamel, gold, copper, silver, electroformed

FAR RIGHT
Circadian Neckpiece #14, 1996
enamel, gold, copper, silver, electroformed





Jamie Bennett

Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA
February 10 – March 30, 1996

by Marjorie Simon

"The ability to communicate an idea tangibly is a thoughtful, emotional endeavor, dependent on a clear sense of purpose and an unencumbered understanding of one's own work."
Jamie Bennett.[1]

"Form is the shape of content." Ben Shahn.[2]

Jamie Bennett believes jewelry is so powerful it is its own subject matter, so significant it ought to contemplate ideas. It's nice to see someone value our endeavor so highly, to use jewelry to reflect on power, position, beauty, seduction, etceteras. Bennett wants us to think about the distance between organic origins and derived forms brought to the body as ornamentation, or the historical point at which ornamentation comes into jewelry. His show at Helen Drutt Gallery in Philadelphia, addressed such aesthetic and historical issues in the guise of volumetric, organic pendants whose enameled skins are decorated with his painterly marks and glyphs.

The pod-shaped pendants nestle comfortably, even comfortingly, against the breast and they have a satisfying heft and volume. Many have dangling charms like lewd little tongues, intimating the theme of seduction and desire Bennett introduces in his statement. Such naturalistic forms as seed pods and pumpkins are a departure from his earlier treatment of domestic themes.

It goes without saying that individual pieces are flawlessly crafted; gold housings gently lap over each other to bezel the velvety pods.

The matte surfaces carry some of the textual vocabulary of Bennett's paintings into the round. Having burst out of the frame in the early '90s, he has continued his exploration of form through controlled electroforming, building up a skin stretched over a biomorphic skeleton.

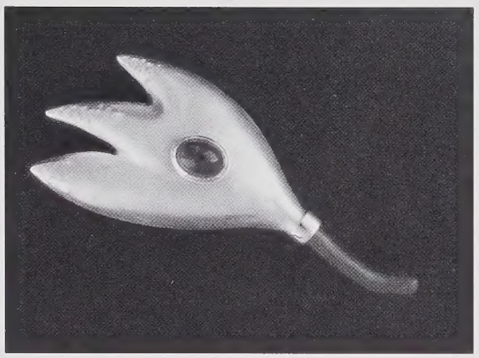
I confess I miss the shocking sensuality of the earlier forms. This work is confident and elegant; it owns its ornamental qualities. The necklaces are cerebral, demanding of intellectual contemplation, cool and composed. Though their purported subject is desire, they seem removed from their erotic source.

Jamie Bennett demands equivalence between an idea and its expression. This body of work makes me ponder the distance between the two, as I found myself thinking more about the ideas he had in mind than the images he used to express them. Nonetheless I welcome Bennett's discourse even when I have to look up words like *Rocaille* (meaning grotto-like) and *Ambage* (pertaining to paths, or ways). And I thank him for his contribution to elevating the level of dialogue about jewelry, for demanding that jewelry and jewelers address intellect and history and not just emotion.

Majorie Simon is a practicing critic and metalsmith residing in Highland Park, New Jersey.

[1] Jamie Bennett, "June Schwarcz, a conversation with Jamie Bennett." *Metalsmith*, Summer, 1983, vol. 3, no. 3. p. 30.
[2] Quoted in *Criticizing Photography*, Terry Barrett, Mayfield Pub. Co., CA. 1996. p. 27.

Josée Desjardins
Ruta Nigrum (brooch), 1995
sterling, 18k gold, apatite, coral
7/8 x 2 1/8"



FAR RIGHT
Mimi Shulman
(center)
Basket of Flowers, 1996
sterling, found materials, 1½ x 1"
(left side)
Food Chain (bracelet), 1995
sterling, 8"

Of Gardens

Prime Gallery, Toronto, Ontario
April 4 – 27, 1996

by Barbara Isherwood

The day I walked into Prime Gallery to review the metals component of *Of Gardens,* Toronto was in shock from a late but hefty dumping of snow. The spring-theme works by five Canadian jewelers proved a wonderful antidote to the wintry weather outside.

The jewelry of Welsh-born Vivienne Jones is organic in conception, featuring layers of irregular, cast, and fabricated-three dimensional forms, subtle matte surfaces, and implied or real movement. Endlessly intriguing, these small and complex works reward prolonged inspection. Inside a silver cauldron-shaped pendant grows a nest of tiny gold and silver elements, the ingredients of a secret, magic brew. A silver stick pin suggests a royal sceptre, yet sprouts limb-like growths and tiny bits of gold reminiscent of nascent buds on a branch. None of these associations are explicit; the space left for the wearer's own interpretations allows these pieces to become truly personal objects.

In contrast to Vivienne's poetic subtleties were the over-the-top insect pins of David McAleese and Lynn Wiggins. These big bugs burst with bright, vermeil plated surfaces and colored niobium, animated by squiggly scroll work, pearly feet, or a single rubellite tourmaline. The duo are technical adventurers, and the textures on these fanciful pieces were scanned into a computer then relief printed.

The elegant sterling silver necklaces, bracelets, and earrings by Van McKenzie represent a more streamlined interpretation of nature. Featuring highly polished, stylized forms based on vegetation, McKenzie's beautifully proportioned pieces have a sensuous quality. The plentiful silver seed pods that dangle from a bracelet would surely feel deliciously cool and smooth against the skin.

From modernism we turn back the clock to the Victorian-inspired work of Mimi Shulman. Trained as a sculptor, Shulman collages her silver castings of birds, bees, and flowers with period found-objects and modern stampings, to create unabashedly romantic pieces. Although her sentimentality sets her work apart from most contemporary metalsmithing, she retains a loyal following who find in her pieces precious metaphors for life's significant moments.

It's a happy coincidence that Montrealer Josée Desjardins's last name means "of gardens." Her organically-inspired pieces featured highly inventive combinations of materials, surfaces, and sensibilities, assembled with consummate craftsmanship and a refreshing sense of wit. Clever details abound. A pair of large matte silver earrings in the form of hollow seed pods swivel on stone mounted studs to reveal long, delicate tendril-like piercings on one side and holes resembling small, round seeds on the other. Pins with faux-taxonomies like *Ruta Salix* or *Ruta Nigium* are comprised of bold and whimsical sterling silver repoussé forms juxtaposed with coral. In the necklace that was her *piéce de resistance,* silver baubles with bumpy, brushed and pierced or oxidized surfaces had smooth, shiny backs – nature meets the machine age, and has a beautiful baby.

Kudos to Prime Gallery for selecting artists with such distinctive approaches to the natural world. Hopefully by the time this is published, our weather will be as refreshing as this show!

Barbara Isherwood is a freelance writer with a Masters degree in Art History.

The Commemorative Cup

The National Ornamental Metal Museum
Memphis, Tennessee
February 11 – April 21, 1996

by Linda Raiteri

In *The Commemorative Cup,* fifty American metalsmiths have met the challenge issued by curator Rosanne Raab and Associates: Design and make a cup commemorating, through its form and surface decoration, a personal or present day social issue. The works in this touring exhibit, supported by Gorham Silver, reveal the artists' very personal views of contemporary reality.

Commemorative silver predates Classical Greece. In America, ornate, personalized silver gifts were very popular until the industrialization of silver manufacturing in the late nineteenth century. By the end of World War II, the unique, hand-crafted and expensive commemorative pieces of the past were out of vogue.

The Commemorative Cup brings us back to honoring the events of our lives, our human frustrations and sorrows as well as our victories and joys. Here are tributes to rites of passage (birth, marriage, divorce, parenthood, childhood, death), travel, fortuna, gender, spirit, and to water towers.

Most of the metalsmiths have drawn from traditional commemorative forms: the utilitarian beaker; the loving cup which has more than one handle so its contents may be shared; the trophy, a cross between a Greek amphora and a loving cup symbolizing Victory; and the goblet and chalice, cups without handles, which emphasize the receiving of the sacred in religious ritual. Christina DePaul has created a trophy of sterling silver and anodized aluminum. The cup is a gridwork supporting charms engraved with children's names, wedding rings, bobby pins, clothespins, thimbles. Her *2000 Years of Quiet Perseverance* honors the strength of women and the backstage role they have played.

Sheltered Blossom is Suzanne Amendolara's tribute to the need for self protection. Based on the shape of the heliconia flower, native to tropical America, the sculptural cup reflects the blossom of grace born from the strength of the nurturing self.

John Cogswell's use of traditional tools and techniques to fabricate his sterling *Kiddush Cup,* a Jewish ceremonial wine cup, marks the passing of religious beliefs down through the generations as well as his own metalsmithing inheritance. The inverted bell of the *Kiddush Cup* narrows to a stem balanced on a narrowing cone that opens to a disc at the base. The piece reverberates with the voice of a cantor and the ring of an anvil.

Stor Grabb celebrates the 50th anniversary of the 100 meter free style swimming record set by metalsmith's Olle Johanson's mother. He chose a design style popular during the time when she set her records, 1938-1950. *Stor Grabb* means "Big Lad" as there was no designation at the time for females. On the base of the cup he has outlined a woman swimming. The stem is a column of silver balls, like bubbles rising. More than a sports trophy, this goblet is a tribute to the woman who is his mother.

Barbara Nilausen-K says of her exquisite silver rose, *Dua: A Prayer of Transcendence*: "This cup is a prayer for my sisters in Bosnia-Hersegovina who encounter the horror of rape. The thorns and their penetration of the petals symbolize the violence of the act. The cup, with gold inner core, symbolizes the inviolate faith and soul of these women."

Arline Fisch created *Springy, A Tribute to Youth.* There is a roughness to the edges of this piece. The cup is wide, like a dish, and the winding stem has resilience so that when pressed down, the cup bobs like a spring.

Richard Mawdsley brings his unique style to his tribute to water towers, often the most prominent structure in a town. *Gamme-water tower #3* could easily have been exhibited in a 19th Century World's Fair.

Marilyn G. da Silva made a sterling silver milk carton and put a silver straw in it. On the front of the carton, she formed a tiny staircase leading to a schoolhouse door. da Silva titled her piece *Literacy: A Thirst for Knowledge.*

The Commemorative Cup is a thought provoking and heart-warming collection of the works of fifty American metalsmiths. Also available at the exhibit is a book of postcards of the pieces. The show opened in January in New York City. From Memphis, it travels to Portland, Santa Fe, and Chicago before closing in Boston, February 1997.

Linda L. Raiteri is a writer and critic who lives in Memphis, Tennessee.

TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT

Robin Kraft
Elegy; Refrain
sterling silver, 14k gold
7½ x 6"

Christina DePaul
2000 Years of Quiet Perseverance
sterling silver, anodized aluminum
7½ x 7½"

Arline Fisch
Springy, A Tribute to Youth
sterling silver
7 x 7"

ABOVE

Kathleen Browne
True Confessions of a Fortune Junkie
sterling silver
3 x 8"

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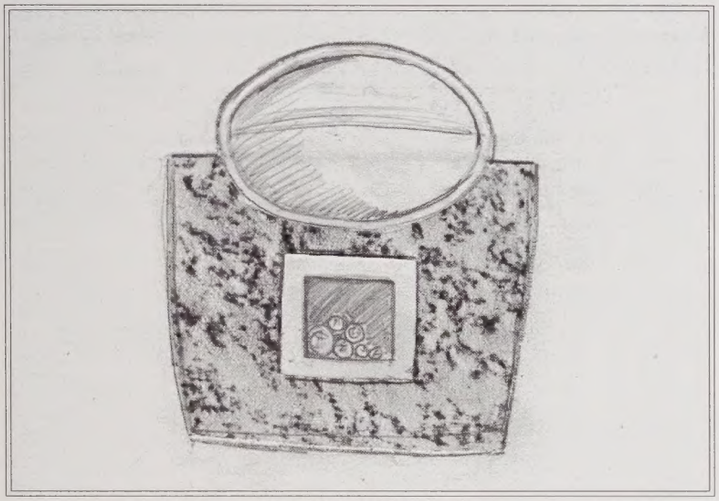

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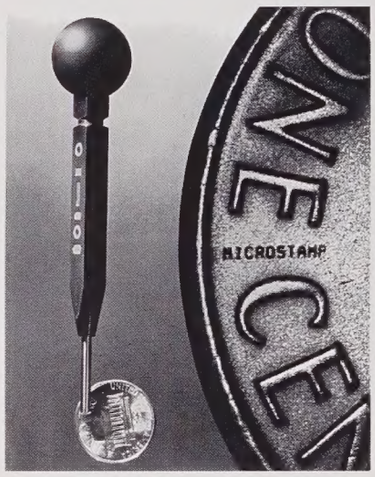

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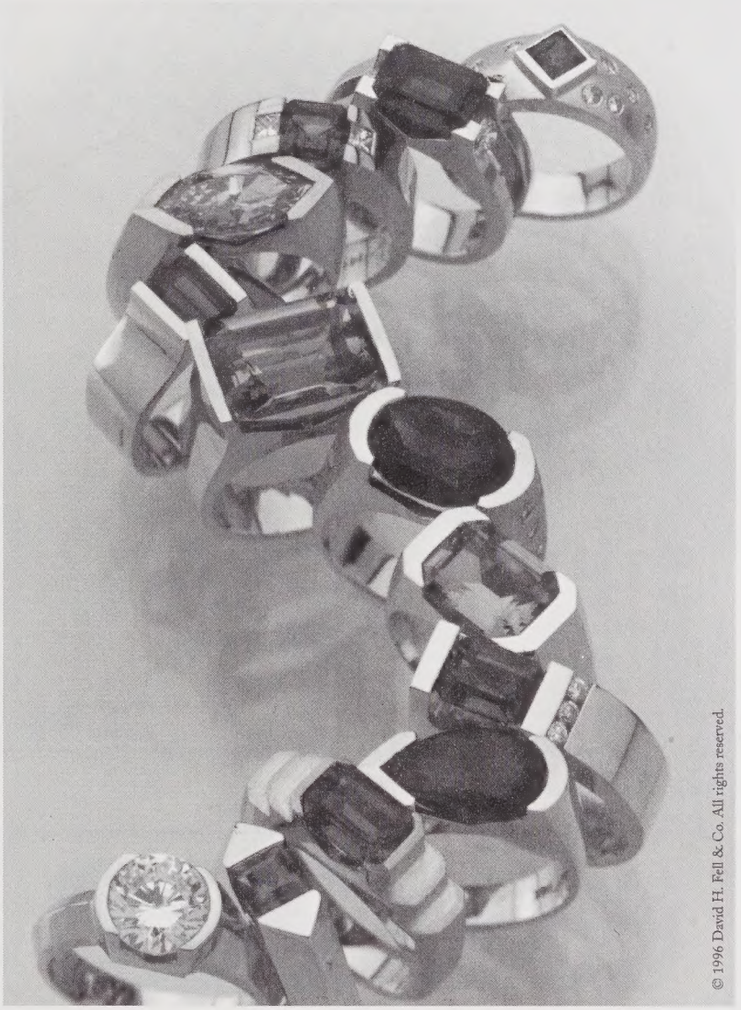

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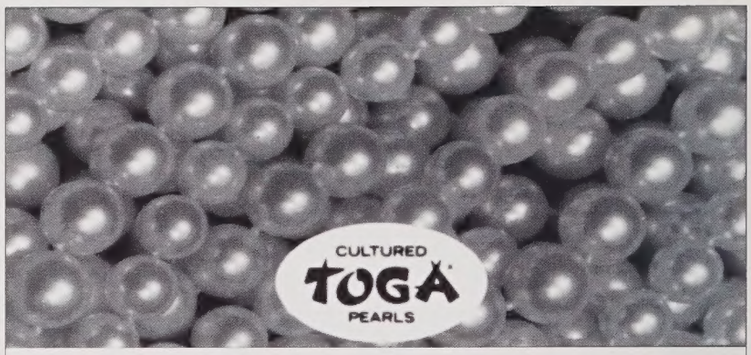

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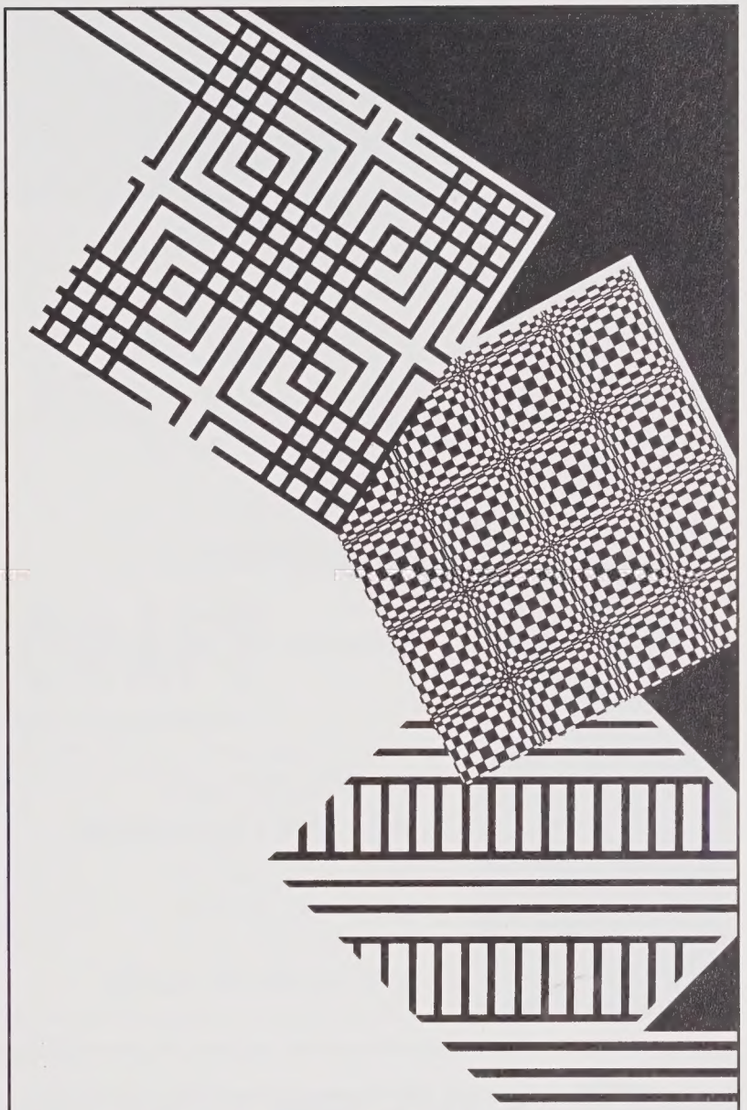

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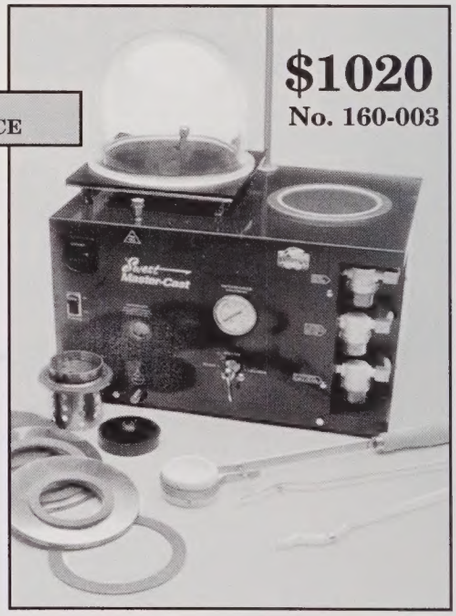

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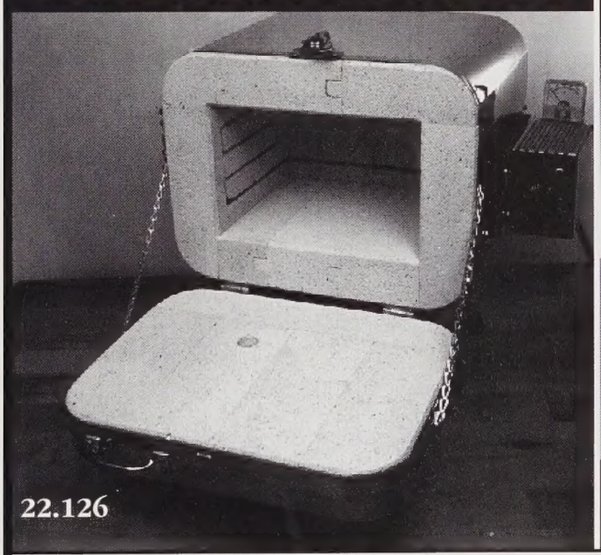

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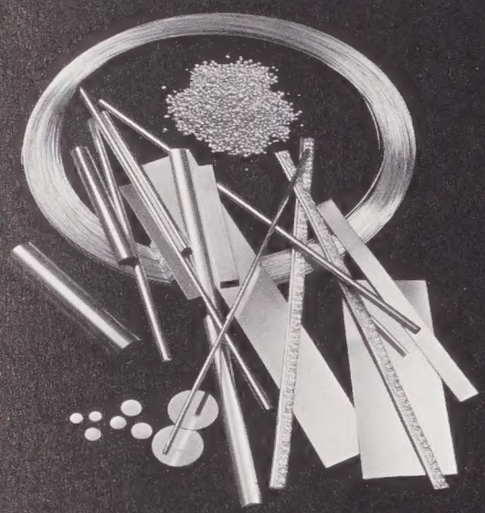

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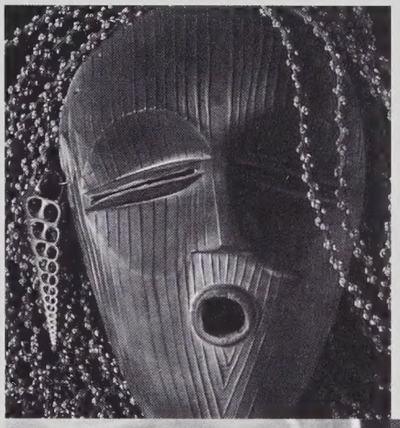

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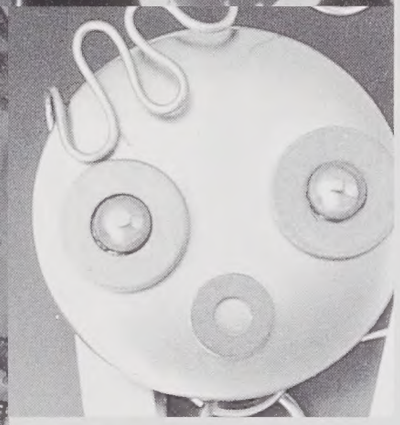

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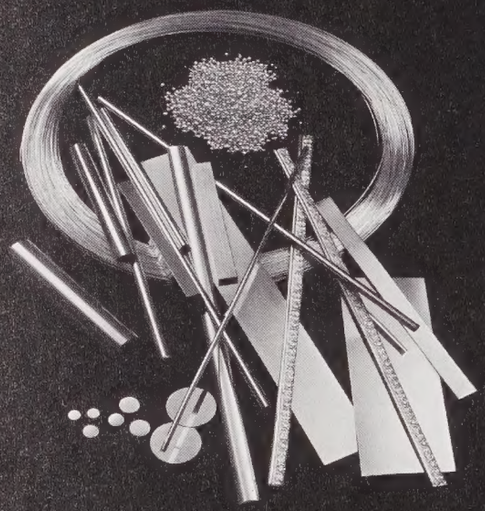

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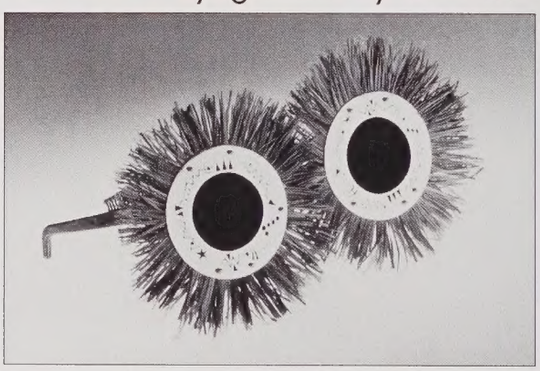

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The following rates are available through March 10, 1997 (tax not included). Single or double: $110; triple: $125; quadruple: $135. Reservations must be secured by a deposit or credit card. For reservations, call (800) 233-1234. Room-sharing can be arranged; call Ava Yetter at (505) 271-9572 for information.

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Galleries: Ornament, JETT, Fairchild & Co., Edith Lambert, Mariposa, Diamond Studio/ Gallery, Off the Wall, Weyrich, Emily Ruffin, Horwich-Lewallan, Kent, Pachamama, and others to be announced.

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Special Events:

- Pin swap
- Country/western dance & buffet, with music by *South by Southwest*
- Tours to manufacturing facilities & historic Old Town Albuquerque
- Trip to Santa Fe's galleries & museums, with a reception at the Santa Fe Museum complex
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Post-Conference Workshops: **April 20–21 in Taos:** study with Marilyn Nicholson on "Mechanics, Connections & Odd Stones." **In Santa Fe:** study with Nancy Shapiro and David Dear on "Direct Pour Casting." Each session is $175. **Also in Santa Fe:** Lane Coulter leads a "Survey of Native American Jewelry," a tour of the museums of New Mexico, including gourmet food and local transportation. Limited to 12 people, this session is $135.

All information is subject to change without notice. Subscribers to METALSMITH will receive a conference registration brochure early in 1997. To get a copy, or to request early registration forms, call chairperson Ivan Barnett at (505) 471-1014, or fax to chairperson Carrie Adell at (505) 438-0968.

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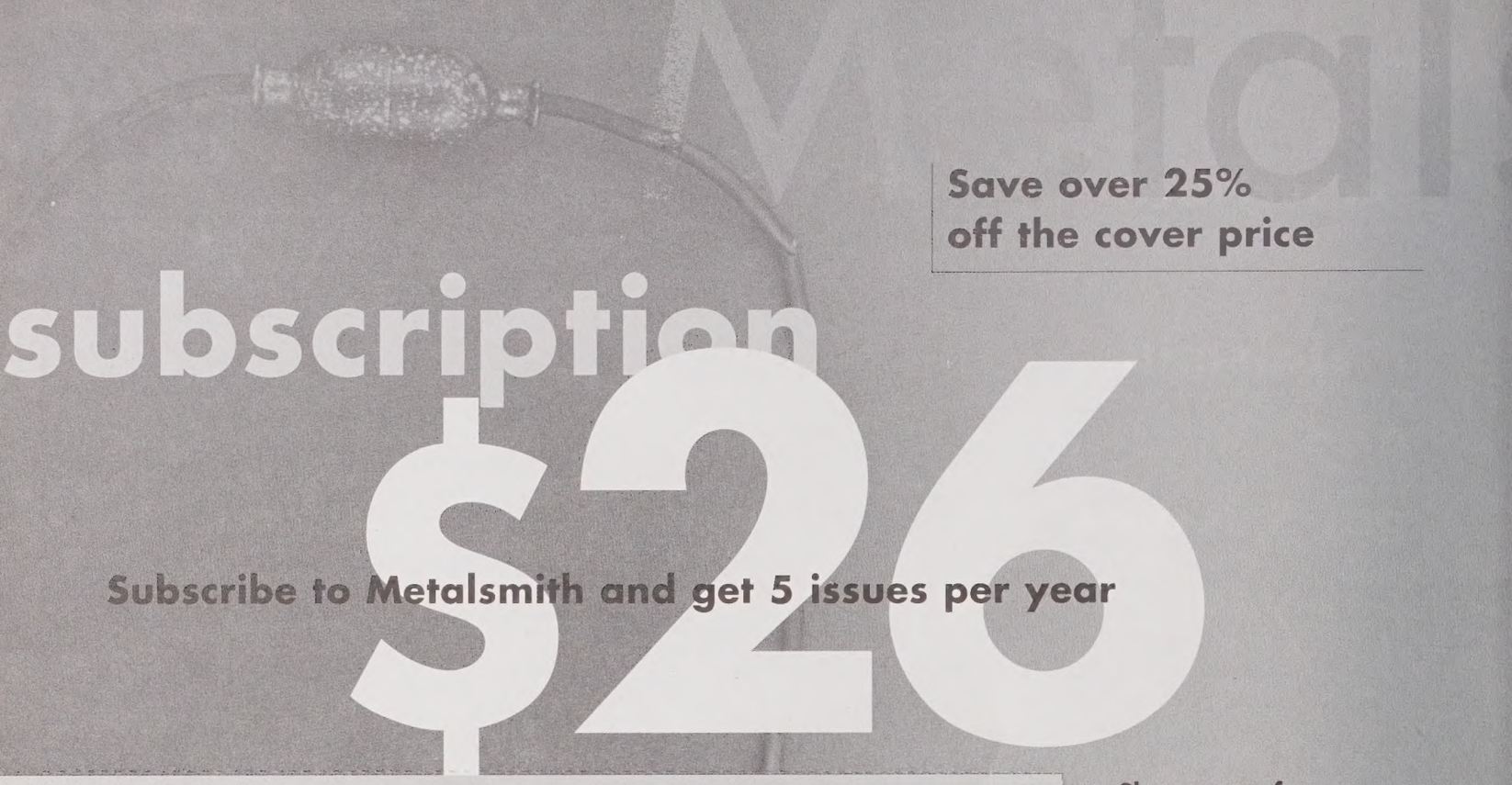

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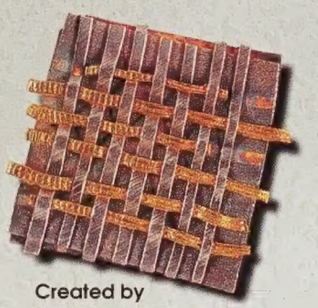
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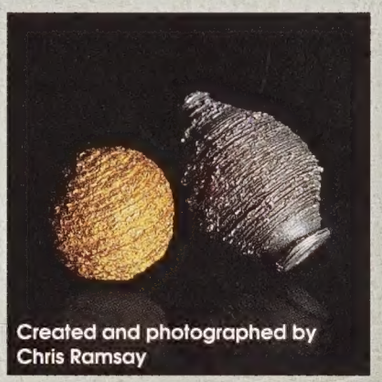
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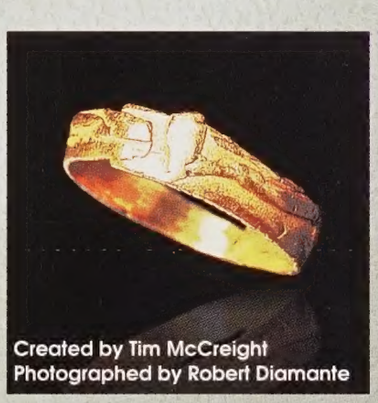
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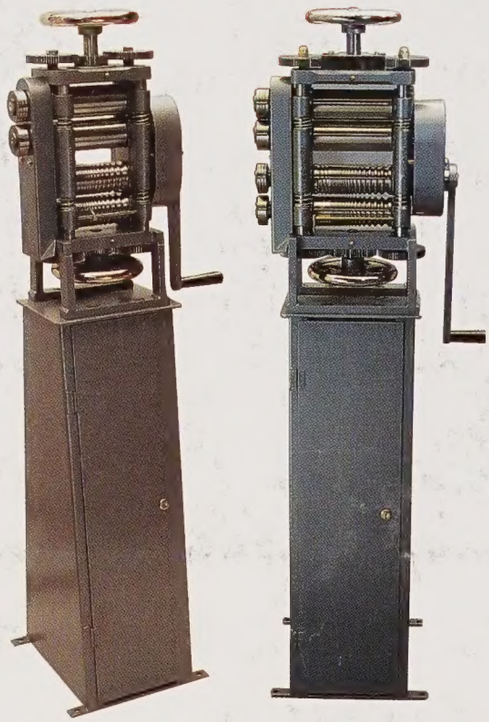

D2EX
120mm
With stand 128.115
Without stand 128.116

New 158mm wide Durston D4
Made for using 6" wide sheet while doing roller texturing / imprinting
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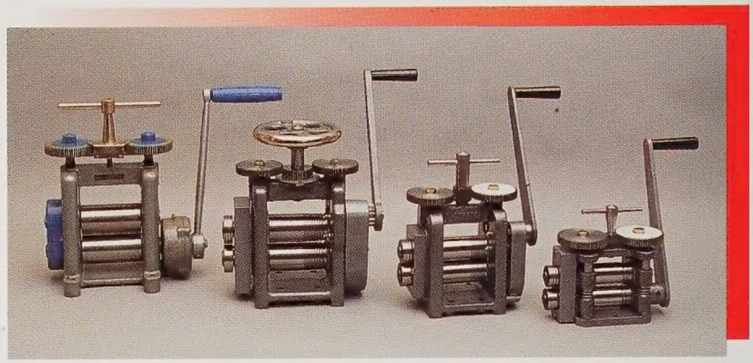
With stand 128.101

Special Sale
Romanian 130mm Combo or Flat mill. Well made machine based on popular Italian Design. Call for current prices.



130mm		120mm		100mm		80 or 100mm	
Combo	128.105	Combo	128.118	Combo	128.108	Combo	128.110
Flat	128.106	Flat	128.119	Flat	128.109	Flat	128.111

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